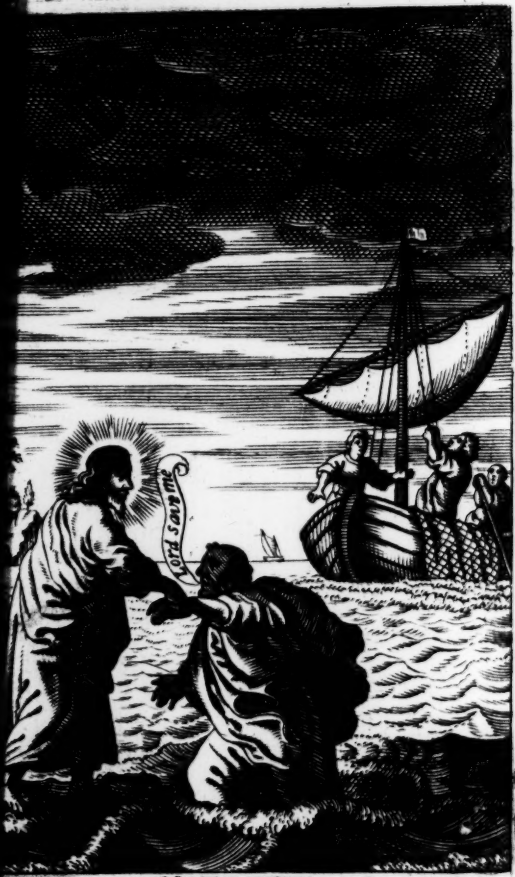
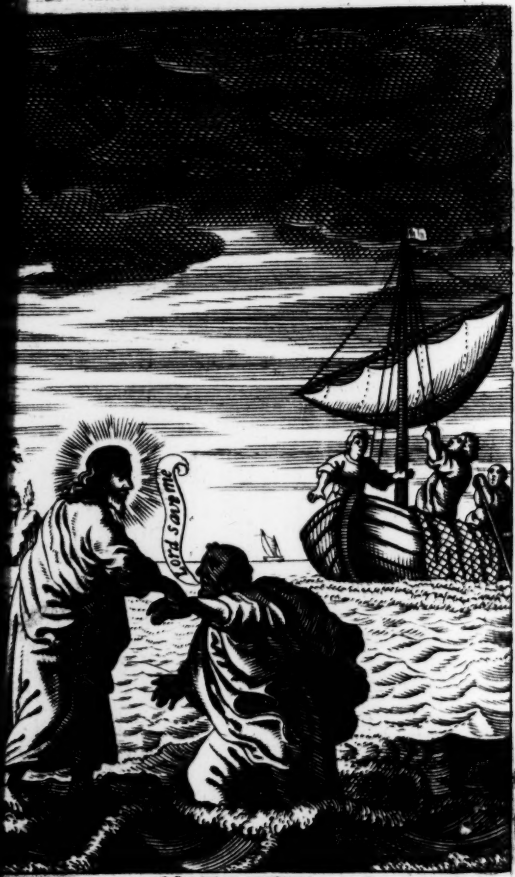


MATTHEW. 14. 30.

London Printed for Henry Brom 1680.
F. H. Van. Hove Sculp:

A242



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RELIGIO
Clerici.

Σπένδειν καὶ θύειν καὶ τὰ πάτρια ἐκάστοις προσήκει, καθαρῶς καὶ μὴ ἀμελῶς.

Epictet..

Take heed unto thy self and unto thy Doctrine, 1 Tim. 4. 16.

LONDON:
Printed for *Henry Brome*, at the Gun in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1681.

TO THE
Equal READER.

I *Deſire thee, Good Reader, (if thou muſt needs be judging) to ſuſpend thy* Cenſure *till thou haſt read the laſt Line of this little* Book; *or, if thou thinkeſt it not worth thy while to read all, prethee let me beg of thee not to meddle with it at all. For that which may to a ſlight glance on ſingle pieces and* Paragraphs *ſeem diſjoynted and* irrelative, *will perhaps in the whole appear (to a ſteady Eye) to have ſuitable* Symmetry *and due* Connexion.

To the Equal Reader.

Some things, and thoſe of moment too, I have but toucht with ſhort Hints, as leaving the reſt to the enlargement and amplification of thy better Ingenuity.

Brevis eſſe laboro, obſcurus fio. *Horat.*

I deſigne no Conteſt or Cavil *in this* Pygmie-*Treatiſe, but a ſlight and ſudden Pourtraict in* Miniature *of naked Truth, as ſhe lately appeared to the* Authour *in a thoughtful* Retirement *of his for a few days. If therefore ſome Lines in this* Draught *ſeem (to Expert Artiſts) but very meanly* deſcriptive *of the Charms and divine Excellencies of her immortal Beauty, they muſt pardon the young* Limner, *ſince ſo much dazling Luſtre might poſſibly confound*

found him, and make his unpractiſed hand ſhake.

Totus tremo horreóque poſtquam aſpexi hanc. *Terent.*

And beſides, this is but an Eſſay *of Art, mere Trial of Skill, and the firſt time that his* Pencil *hath been publick.*

Thou knoweſt, Reader, that let Sham-*truths be drawn as ſeverally as mens fancies and humours pleaſe, (yet) ſhe herſelf hath nevertheleſs one regular, uniform, eternal Face. And there is moſt certainly ſuch a thing as right* Reaſon, *thô rational men (which I'le tell thee is very odde and amazing) by the very ſelf-ſame pretended* Guide *follow ſeveral diſtinct tracks, and all but one Erroneous.*

But

But thou maiſt as well argue, that the Pole-ſtar *is not ſteady, ſince many are bewilder'd and bemir'd by an* Ignis fatuus, *as raſhly ſuſpect true* Reaſon, *becauſe now adays Errours of all ſorts do impudently aſſume its ſhape.*

And there is as undoubtedly ſuch a thing as true Religion, *although ('tis monſtrous to conſider that) we are at this very day, after near* 1700 *years acquaintance, as hotly diſputing where, and what* ſhe *is, as if no man yet had ever had a full and perfect view of her face.*

This makes ſome licentious perſons now a daies, willing to ſuſpect that all Religion is but the general Laws of Nature, *and (at the beſt) they reduce Chriſtianiry it ſelf to the firſt ſtage from whence it long*

ago

ago ſet out, viz. Common Morality.

Diſputes, Doubts, and Conteſts will, I fear, never ceaſe, as long as Ambition, Avarice, *and* Impiety *bear ſway in the world. But ſhould perverſe differences by endleſs* ſuperfetations *ſwarm ſtill daily more and more (which God prevent) yet may the moſt doubtful ignorant Soul take ſafe* Sanctuary *in this laſt reſerve of irrefragable* Argument, viz. *to follow ſtill with generous and ſtedfaſt duty, our* Royal, *our* Noble, *our* Honourable, *and our* Reverend Learned Leaders, *(till we can demonſtrate that they are in the wrong:) for thus at the very worſt we can hazard but a poſſible, pardonable miſtake, and that too in dutiful proſecution of our Chriſtian* Obedience, 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14.

To

To the Equal Reader.

To conclude, Reader, 'tis my hearty wish, that the meanness and impertinence, the brevity and narrowness of this weak shallow discourse (that follows) may not in the least eclipse *the glory of its* Illustrious Title: *For I designed at first (however I have failed in the publication) to speak to no body, of no body, and for no body but my self. All its Errours I am ready to acknowledge, which I fear are not a few; it being the Product of a dull melancholy Retreat, and the hasty Abortive Result of a labouring minde, without borrowing the usual help and concurrence of other mens thoughts: I only am therefore blameable and responsible for all the mistakes.*

I easily foresee, Reader, *that some malevolent persons will (with railing*

railing and detraction) tell thee, that my very handling *it hath* ſoiled *the dignity of the ſubject.* *'Tis true, I cannot prevent* uncharitable *Aſperſions; but to the wiſe, the good, and moderate, I ſay,* What man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man that is in him? 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *As for the reſt,*

Odi profanum Vulgus & arceo.

Reli-

RELIGIO CLERICI.

IT prov'd matter of no ſmall wonder to a good old Heathen, when he obſerved ſuch various appearances of different Opinions, Humours and propenſions in his Countrymen of *Greece*; eſpecially too when he conſidered how that all theſe Contrarieties and Diſproportions proceeded

ded from men begot, born, and bred in the ſame Climate, under the ſame Laws, Conſtitutions, and Cuſtoms, and the ſource of all whoſe Inclinations and paſſions reſulted from one common ſimplicity of the very ſame ſpecifick humane nature. But if he was puzled in the reſolution of this ſcruple then, to what a far higher degree of aſtoniſhment would his Admiration have riſen, if he had lived in theſe days of ours, when (as if ſome extraordinary malignant Conjunction

junction in the Heavens did in ſpite produce a general diviſion on Earth, eſpecially) in our poor Iſland there are as many different Paſſions and Affections, Plots and Agitations, Factions and Faſhions, Opinions and Religions, almoſt as men. And when too the Reaſons and Advantages for Unity and Agreement both in Principle and Practice, are far greater, and of a ſtamp more divine, than ever our Heathens Age or Countrey could pretend to.

There are two or three Conſiderations, that might eaſily remove all this mans Amazement at the different *Phænomena*'s of his Countrymens Carriage and Converſation.

For, to be begotten and born in the ſame way and manner, Educated in the ſame Country, and wearing all the ſame common humane nature, are concurrences 'tis true that might happily cauſe ſome faint reſemblances, but could not reaſonably be expected to create ſuch a Unity of temper, as to coun-

counterballance thoſe many other accidents that urge the contrary.

The way of Mans Generation, and its attending Circumſtances, ſeem alike, 'tis true; but without doubt there is a certain Magical Influence of nature (derived from Geleſtial Motions, or *Extraduce*) that tempers us all diverſly in our very *fieri*, and gives each of us a ſeveral tincture whilſt we lye looſe in our firſt principles: and thus each Individual being blended in a different faſhion by Na-

tures Myſterious Art (as I may ſay) it proves as difficult to find two Conſtitutions, as two Faces exactly alike.

From this various Contexture proceed our reſpective humours and Complexions, which often prove a more forcible cauſe of our Opinions and Paſſions, and of the diſſimilitudes and contrarieties of them, than bare Reaſon and Free-will: It certainly ſtrongly influences thoſe faculties in their operations, and in a greater meaſure too, than many

many weak and unwary Mortals apprehend, to whom ignorance in this point proves oftentimes a moſt unſpeakable deluſion and prejudice.

From this ſecret work of our firſt nature 'tis, that Man is, (as it were) a *ſpecies* to Man, and our difference is more than that of *Numerical.*

And by this means our Heathens Countrymen, (having no infallible rule of Knowledge, nor ſteady guide of their Actions) might well be as different in their Opinions and

Practices, as they were in Natural Complexion, by which their Reaſon and Will was ſo ſtrongly led and byaſſed.

For alas, their Reaſon was dull and blunt, having no better edge than what it procured by frequent Colliſion and reflection on its ſelf; by all which notwithſtanding, it could never arrive (even in the beſt of them) to ſo much brightneſs and clearneſs, as to guide and fix them in the one ſteady Truth, (in purſuit of which they ran into a thou-

thouſand Superſtitious & Idolatrous Errours) nor to ſo much ſtrength as to hold them to one conſtant regular Tenor of Goodneſs and Juſtice.

Nor indeed was it poſſible it ever ſhould; for they poor Creatures had as large a doſe of Natutural Corruption and infection derived from their unknown Parent *Adam*, as we, and yet were deſtitute of thoſe helps and antidotes that have by Gods grace allaied the mortal malignity of the venome in us, and leſſen-

ed much that dominion and power, which Errour and Vice naturally had over the Reaſon and Will of all men before the appearance and Doctrine of the holy Jeſus.

But again, my honeſt Heathen never thought of the vaſt number of their reſpective Gods and Temples, where each man worſhipped this or that Deity as his fancie led him, or the Choice and Cuſtom of the City or Country directed and required: ſurely no ſmall difference in mens Manners

ners and Opinions aroſe from this.

But farther ſtill, *Greece* was Canton'd out into many petty Polities, and independent Commonwealths, governed by their proper diſtinct Laws and Conſtitutions: this too muſt needs create diſſimilitudes as to Civil Obſervances, Cuſtoms, Practices, and Intereſts; though the common Education of the *Grecians*, as to the main, might be much alike, which he urges, *&c.*

And laſtly, the ſeveral parts men acted in their re-

reſpective Political capacities, and the many different Occurrences and Emergencies that daily attend diverſly the Life and Action, Commerce and Buſineſs of each particular perſon, muſt accordingly modifie the Manners, Qualities, and Faſhions of men.

When I weigh theſe Circumſtances in my Authours Age and Country, truly his wonder ceaſes to be mine, and a far greater ariſes: *Miror magis undique noſtris uſque adeo turbatur agris.*

Virgil. Ecl. 1.

I

I wonder much more at the many diverſities and diviſions in our own Climate, this poor Iſland, where moſt or all of the other reaſons and occaſions of difference wholly ceaſe: And I looſe my ſelf in a Maze and Labyrinth of thought, whilſt I ſtrive to purſue the genuine cauſe of our divers Opinions and Practices, when (as one would think) all Reaſons imaginable concur for Union and Harmony.

We acknowledge all one God and Jeſus, and have

have all one revealed will of that God done into plain good Engliſh, free of diſtracting ambiguities (like the Heathen Oracles) or perplext and obſcure ſignifications.

We have all one and the ſame gracious King and Governour, the ſame Laws, Statutes and Ordinances, made by one conſent of our ownſelves, and not impoſed at the *Arbitrary diſcretion of another: We have all one common Intereſt to preſerve Property and Peace, and are all ſhut up by Na-

Nature, and inclos'd in one Iſland; as if ſhe deſigned univerſal Concord and Likeneſs, in excluſion of all Forreign varieties and mixtures.

We have all one common Nature as Men, conſiſting of Reaſon and Will, the Eſſential Faculties of one ſimple Eſſence the Soul; their reſpective objects too are One, True, and Good: And we have all equally one Infallible Guide to both theſe, the Book of God.

And yet from all theſe Eſſential ſimplicities, environ'd

viron'd on all ſides with Circumſtances pointing at Unity; through an odd Caprice of ill manage, and by a monſtrous Equivocal Generation, ariſe thouſands of diverſities.

The Reaſon of Men (in itſelf undoubtedly the ſame) ſhall yet, in diſquiſition of its own object, Truth, make innumerable Excurſions; I mean, as many men ſhall have ſo many opinions about a ſingle Verity; which is impoſſible, if they did not act in ſpite of Nature, and argue more with their Will

Will than Underſtanding.

For, *Poſitis omnibus ad agendum requiſitis*, Truth diſplayed is as much the neceſſary object of our Underſtanding, as Light is of Eyes open and ſound.

I confeſs endleſs Evaſions, and contrary plauſibilities may be oppoſed to Truth, though never ſo clear; but 'tis apparent then, that Hypocriſie and Subtlety, Arrogancy and Obſtinacy, not Reaſon or Judgment, hold the Cudgels. And hence ſwarms,

that

that daily ſpurious Iſſue of Anſwers upon Anſwers, and Rejoynders upon Rejoynders, which our Modern Diſſenters oppoſe to the Sober Aſſertions and Loyal Vindications of our Church and King. Anſwers indeed they call them, and they are ſo as far as the Title-Page goes, but no farther, alas!

I have methinks ſo good an opinion of the Judgment of two or three of the chief Oracles that head and lead our modern Schiſmaticks, that I will never grant their private thoughts

thoughts and publick writings to run parallel: ſuch ſtrong and plain truths as are daily urged to them, muſt of neceſſity carry Confutation (and ſhould of right Conviction too) along with them.

No, no, they are loth to leave their old Aſſociates, and a ſhame-fac'd reluctancy reſtrains them from giving themſelves the Lye: They will not now deſert the old Cauſe, though ſhe have loſt the field Spiritual and Temporal too; nor lay down their Weapons, though Con-

Conquered, and generouſly received to Grace.

But by their leave, if this be true, the Caſe is worſe and worſe; their Faith is Faction, their Reaſon Rancour, and their Courage Contradiction. And we muſt beware of ſuch ſly Combatants; for though they have loſt the Field, they may ſtill by Stratagem gain the Battle: Such Exploits have been afore. We fairly Conquered them once, 'tis true; but not following Victory home, we now run the ſame Fate, and ſuf-

ſuffer the ſame Judgment the *Iſraelites* did, by permitting the *Canaanites* to dwell among them, *viz.* many of us have been enticed to go a whoring after their Gods, and as the Angel told the people at *Bochim*, they are left to be *thorns in our ſides.* Judg. *Chap.* 2. *v.* 3.

'Tis now 1700 years very near, ſince Chriſtianity was promulgated; and not much leſs, ſince the true Model and Platform of it was delivered into our hands, to be for ever the Architype, Rule and

and Standard of Faith and Practice. And yet from this plain and uniform Model, designed for the help and rule of our Edification, have in all Ages been drawn by the warm fancies of busie Enthusiasts, and the like, such monstrous Medlies, and odd Landskips of Opinions, as (in another kind) the most extravagant Conceptions of Poets and Painters have never equal'd. And truly I think one and the other have some grounds much alike for their Whimsies;

I am ſure they have each of them had too much of one priviledge, and that is the *Quidlibet audendi Poteſtas.* Horat. *de art. Poet.*

Chriſtianity, I ſay, is now almoſt 1700 years old; and though it, as its Author, is ever one and the ſame, yet what by the Supineneſs of its true, and what by the devices of its pretended Profeſſours, it is at this day ſo overgrown with thorns and briars, and the moſſy Excreſcences of rotten and Corrupted Skulls, that (had not our God been very

very gracious) we ſhould hardly diſtinguiſh and diſcern its genuine beauty and Native Luſtre through the Rubbiſh and Barricade of Schiſm and Hereſie.

I always thought Gods holy word ſo plain, that to invent an Heterodox Doctrine, we muſt do a violence to that, and our own Reaſon too: And yet what nice diſſections have been made of theſe Scriptures, by too bold and curious Inſpectours into the Secrets of God? How many Texts have they ſet upon

upon the Rack, and endeavoured by cruel and unnatural diſtortions, to make them ſay as they would have them, and confeſs what they never knew? from whence have followed ſuch rents and diſlocations in ſome Members of our Religion, as (I fear) are almoſt become paſt Cure.

I would fain know what one thing material hath been diſcovered by the noiſe and buſtle of all theſe buſie and ſubtle Pates, that was not as well or better known in

the very first Centurie. I believe that in all the whole prodigious Catalogue of Voluminous Tracts, and laboured Controversies, (enough at this day to make good St. *John's* Hyperbole) you cannot find one new Truth of any import or significancie to our Religion, which was not known 1500 years ago. On the contrary, I am sure they have, together with a thousand falsities, invented perplexities and empty trifles without number,

Joh. *Chap. last v. last.*

ber, which the pureſt ages of Chriſtianity never dreamt of.

Some have ſtretcht their brains to graſp Myſteries beyond their reach, and would crowd the Infinite Eſſence, and Ineffable Attributes of that great God into the ſenceleſs rules & terms of their Schools, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain.

What horrid Hereſies have men run into, by preſuming to fathome the Myſterie of the bleſſed Trinity! and whilſt they have forcibly preſt Rea-

ſon on to take as large a ſtep as Faith, they have ſtumbled and fell, to their utter confuſion.

My humble (yet ſtedfaſt) Faith in the hidden Things of God, can reſt fully ſatisfied in the ὅτι, without preſuming (to no purpoſe) ſo far as the διότι. nay, and my Reaſon too (if it muſt needs be medling) doth here moſt juſtly acquieſce, without farther ſcrutiny, in this concluſion; *'Tis certainly ſo, becauſe God hath ſaid it.*

And thus I can eaſily believe that the Godhead con-

consists of Three Persons, without the help of ὑπόστασις, *persona* or *suppositum*: and the Incarnation of my Saviour is a Mystery indeed in Divinity, but none in Philosophy to me; for that tells me, 'twas as easie (to speak *more humano*) for the Almighty to set Nature at work in Holy *Maries* Womb to frame a man of her Seed, as to make a Woman out of the side of *Adam*.

But 'tis my opinion, that the truest Faith supersedes all arguing about the My-

ſteries of our Religion; and when St. *Peter* bids us *be ready to give a reaſonable account*, 'tis not of fathomleſs Secrets, but of our Hope and Faith in Jeſus. Yet that Faith (I am perſwaded) was always moſt acceptable with our Saviour, that acknowledged him with a plain and ſimple ſincerity, without a why, or wherefore: And I believe the nimble Confeſſion of *Nathaniel*, though upon a ſlight occaſion, was better approved of by

1 Pet. 3. 15.

Joh. 1. 49, 50.

by Chriſt, than the cautious proceed, and deliberate advances of Judicious *Nichodemus.* 3 Joh. 9.

However, I like not that high flight of the Father neither, *Certum eſt, quia impoſſibile eſt*; nor his who ſaid, there were not Impoſſibilities enow in Religion for an active Faith: ſuch Hyperbolick ſtrains do Chriſtianity no kindneſs I am ſure, eſpecially in the Mahometan and Pagan world.

For were *Socrates, Ci-*

cero, or *Seneca* now alive, I might with far better ſucceſs attempt their Converſion, by the rehearſal of Chriſts Sermon on the Mount, or St. *Pauls* Epiſtles, than by aſſaulting raſhly their unprepared Reaſon with the difficulties and ſeeming contradictions of the *Athanaſian* Creed.

It can no ways properly be ſaid, that there is any one Impoſſibility in the Bible: For if the Letter and matter of fact be true, (as it may on that ſcore juſtly claim a ſtron-

ger

ger title to verity than any Book of longer or later date, which yet we own without ſcruple) then the Conceſſion that 'twas of Divine Inſpiration eaſily follows; and then the conſequence is as neceſſary, That whatever it contains muſt be of infallible truth and certainty.

And what if we cannot ſolve its Myſteries? Their firſt deſign was to be objects of Chriſtian Faith and humble acquieſcence, not of Pert and Curious Argumentation.

If we will believe nothing, but what we can make out, and clear of doubts, (ay and ſtrong ones too) even in things obvious and familiar, and with which we converſe every day, we muſt ſhut the whole Viſible World out of doors, and ſit down content with abſolute *Scepticiſm.*

I declare I have as even a notion of Spirit as of Body, and underſtand Cogitation fully as well as Extenſion: I am no more privy to the Mechaniſm of my own hearts Motion,

Motion, than I am to the Myſterie and feats of Memory and Imagination, or to the way how my Soul by a detachment of nimble Emiſſaries, commands my foot to move in an inſtant. In a word, I underſtand nothing of this kind by adequate and Commenſurate Science, but by Philoſophick gueſs, or Allegorick repreſentations. 11 Eccle. 5.

I remember that a now Reverend and moſt Learned Prelate, (at whoſe private Lectures I had the honour long ago to attend)

tend) amongſt other moſt excellent notices, told us, that Immaterial, Infinite, and the like, were Negatives indeed in words, (for the barrenneſs of Language, and our own weakneſs and ignorance) but properly and in themſelves they were abſolute Poſitivities; and again, that their Contraries, Finite and Material, were pure Negations in reſpect of the other.

Deſcartes, who opened the way to his Philoſophy by ſtopping his Ears and cloſing his Eyes, and ſtrip-

ſtripping himſelf naked to bare Cogitation, found out one Original Truth (as he thought) *viz. Cogito, Ergo Sum:* what a prodigious fallacie paſt upon this acute man! he might as well (in that caſe) have argued, *Curro, Ergo Sum*; the argument had been as good, though it lay at a little farther diſtance. Thus are we all weak and blind in Natural and Divine Secrets and Myſteries. 8 Eccle. 17.

The Canon of Holy Scripture is without doubt ſo plain, as to Eſſentials

ſentials of Faith and Practice, that I cannot perſwade my ſelf to believe there was ever ſuch a thing as *Nuda Hæreſis:* I am rather inclin'd to think that Secular Motives of pride, diſcontent, and avarice, raiſed the boyling ferment in ambitious and reſtleſs heads; as was moſt notoriouſly apparent in the buſineſs of *Arrius.* This Spirit that agitated in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, worketh now ſtill in the Children of diſobedience: And when good and Learned men offer

offer at a Cure by publick writing or diſpute, the bad ſucceſs and fruitleſs conſequence ſhews, that the wrong remedy is applyed; the malady lying more in the perverſeneſs of the Will, than the miſtake of the Intellect.

And by this means, Demonſtration itſelf often fails of Conviction; and the ſtrongeſt and plaineſt Truths urged home to Schiſmaticks, ſtay not, but are ſent back daily in a faint retort, ſtuft more with weak Evaſion, and peeviſh Gavil, than Right

or

or Reaſon. Juſt thus 'tis at this very Juncture, and (if in this caſe Inferences *de facto* are good conſequences) is like always to be.

I wonder that *Conſtantine* ſhould ſo far countenance that damnable Hereſie of *Arrius*, as to allow it the dangerous ſcope of a free Debate in the Council of *Nice*. Had not Royal Reſtraints, and legal Penalties, been a ſafer and more Orthodox way to repreſs an Errour ſo palpable, that it carried its Confutation in its

its own face? No doubt but ſome Plenipotentiaries of Heaven itſelf aſſiſted at that Spiritual Treaty, yet (as far as I underſtand) their ſtrong and zealous Arguments could hardly reduce the contrary faction to an amicable and Chriſtian complyance; whom pride had fore-armed with reſolution to demur at Demonſtration, and cavil at Conviction. However, with much ado, after a tedious debate, they compoſed the Catholick Creed, that bears the name. Diſ-

Disputes in Religion are often fruitless(because improper) Applications, and serve but to increase the heat and feud of Opiniatours: They may indeed confirm the Right, but very rarely convince the Erroneous party.

I conceive the Emperour was in a manner forced to give this Heresie so much loose Line as a fair debate; its Contagion began to rage in the Christian world, and like the Jewish Idolatry, it had seated itself in the high Places too: besides, its

its high pretences might incline him to think the occaſion worthy the ſolemnity of that famous confluence: for although the conteſt was comprized within the narrow compaſs of two Greek words, yet the controverted point was of no leſs importance, than the Divinity of our God and Saviour. Yet that all this was the wrong remedy for that diſeaſe, appears plainly from its breaking out with re-doubled heat and violence in the ſucceeding Reign of *Conſtantius*. The

The edge and keenneſs of our preſent diviſions, we may chiefly date from the late Act of Toleration: Such allowances proceed from Royal mercy and tenderneſs, 'tis true, but the miſchiefs that always enſue are innumerable, and grow to a formidable ſtature by inſenſible degrees, till at length they ſuck themſelves into a ſtate and habit ſtrong enough for Rebellion, even from the breaſts of Royal Indulgence. My opinion is, (in all deep humility) that by ſuch con-

condeſcentions of Grace, Princes act againſt their own power, and elude their own Authority; they give Licenſe to worſhip the righteous God a wrong way, and eſtabliſh Schiſm in Church and State by a Law. Conceſſions of this kind Extorted (as it were) from Royal Clemency and pity may indeed confirm preſent Impunity, but cannot give Innocence to Diſſenters: To whom we may boldly and juſtly rejoyn, whenever they plead the Kings Grace, in the words of

19 Matt. 8. of our Saviour to the Phariſees, *Moſes* becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts ſuffered you this, (*to put away your Religion*) but from the beginning it was not ſo.

'Tis now a Soleciſm in Chriſtianity to talk of a weak Brother, and Liberty of Conſcience is nonſence *totidem verbis*. God forbid that at this day, after 1600 years, there ſhould remain any doubts or ſcruples unreſolved in our Religion, when 'tis openly diſplaied to the view

view of all men, without ſhades or obſcurities, in moſt clear and lively colours.

If the good and wholſome Act for Uniformity had continued ſtill in full force, it had in time found mens Purſes more tender than their Conſciences: At leaſt, it would have done ſo much good, that the old Pique had been buried with this Generation, and the next would have Conformed of courſe. Whereas now I fear this new Liberty hath fixt the Contagion in

in the very Vitals of our diſſenting brethren, and their Children will be tainted *Ex traduce.*

Diſputandi pruritus eſt ſcabies Eccleſiæ, ſaid a Learned Countryman of ours: It hath certainly been a great promoter of Schiſm, and the fuel of Faction. To ſee the Elaborate follies of the ſubtile Schoolmen, and the quirks of Polemical Divinity (what an odd word that is to affix to the plain and eaſie Religion of the meek and humble Jeſus?) their curious niceties in reſearches

ches of matters, either altogether above, or else not worth our knowledge; their pretty Mazes and Labyrinths drawn by Art in puzled and bewildred Thought; but above all, their slippery evasions, and nimble escapes, (like *Hercules*'s *Protean* Antagonist) when prest hard by close and solid reasoning, this is all matter of as great diversion, as it had been to have been present at the odd posture of Circumstances in the first confusion of Tongues at *Babel*.

'Tis pretty to obſerve their Schools; in what order and awful ſilence non-Entities ſit ranged into Claſſes according to their proficiency or quality, and not one dares move till call'd out toSay, and then they ſpeak in the Language of *Utopia*. They can (with ſtrange dexterity) make an appoſite Anſwer to an unintelligible Queſtion, and will argue *pro* and *con* whole hours together, about what was never ſeen, felt, heard or underſtood. 'Tis impoſſible to poſe them; for

for when they cannot enodate your Argument, they ſerve you with a diſtinction the ſame trick that *Alexander* did the *Gordian* knot. They can as readily deſcribe the parts and proportions of a Chimæra, as you can of a man or a horſe. But their maſterpiece lies in this, they can underſtand words that ſignifie nothing, or (which is much the ſame) ſignifie they know not what; and yet they have a ſlight to make the ſame words mean any thing. But this you'll

ſay is very ſtrange; take any common ordinary truth or Propoſition, ſtrip it naked of its plain Engliſh, and ſend it to be dreſt in their Tire-room, its Port and Garniture ſhall immediately become ſo majeſtick, that (though you were never ſo well acquainted with it before) you ſhall gaze at it with as much Ignorance, as the honeſt Countryman did at the Powder of *Album-Græcum*, before he underſtood the trick on't.

Theſe men can baffle Truth in what faſhion and

and to what degree you pleaſe; as alſo advance a Falſitie how far you will, to *probabile*, *veriſimile*, and (upon a good occaſion) to abſolute demonſtration.

From their Repoſitories, men of ambitious and working Pates have been furniſhed with Tools and Inſtruments of all ſorts and ſizes, to form and faſhion, file and vary Doctrines and Opinions ſuitable to the deſign and work in hand: Here are Moulds fitly prepared to caſt any Schiſm or Hereſie

in; and in ſhort, all Enginery and Artillery that the Church (militant too much in this ſence) can poſſibly want upon any occaſion, they can readily produce out of their Polemick Magazines.

With what ſly and ſubtle Artifices theſe men have infected Chriſtianity, or furniſhed others with means and methods of doing ſo, is beyond my power to declare; yet I doubt not but the ſpring and head of our many modern Sects and Schiſms might in ſome meaſure be

be traced up to theſe Fountains.

The Romaniſts I am ſure are very ſenſible of the great advantages their monſtrous Tenets receive from hence; they obſerve it ſeldome to fail at a dead lift; by its aſſiſtance they often confound the ſimple, and not ſeldom amuſe even the more knowing. However, they can make a ſafe retreat hither, when beaten out of the field; and their boldeſt Champions, to avoid the danger of a cloſe purſuit, muce nim-

bly, and ſculk in the ſubterfuges of this thorny wilderneſs.

It comes in my head here, to ſay, (though 'tis not much to the purpoſe, you'll think, but that's all one; and yet you may perceive it bears ſome ſquint relation to this diſcourſe too) I have often admired why *Ariſtotles* Philoſophy ſhould be (to ſo great a degree) the chief darling of ſo many Learned and Reverend men among us. They deduce all things from his Text, reduce all to him,

as

as the infallible Teſt of univerſal truth. I am but a very mean Judge, I confeſs, but yet I know there are ſome things in him very weak and ſhallow, many palpable Errours and notorious falſities; and in what he is moſt Excellent, the ſame hath been long ago, and is now found in two or three other Languages, without any the leaſt dependance on the Philoſopher, and this in a far greater degree of perfection too. But alas, the choiſeſt truths and

beſt Obſervations in *Italian*, *French*, *Latin*, or *Engliſh*, reliſh not near ſo well, nor have they half the poynancy, as when ſerved up with Grecian garniſh after the Attick Mode.

I had ſometime ſince an occaſional diſcourſe with a good and Learned man, who, upon quoting ſome ſaying of *Ariſtotles*, immediately (with emphatick admiration) ſubjoyns, The very ſame, ſaith he, with that of the Apoſtle! I have quite forgot the words, but 'twas ſome

ſome moral doctrinal Precept I remember, which a thouſand men might have ſpoken as well as the Philoſopher; ſuch Propoſitions being (we all know) the impreſſes and common notions of Rational Nature: but *Ariſtotle* ſpoke Greek too, and therefore imitated the Apoſtle a twofold way.

Who would have thought that old *Homer* ſhould ever have arrived to ſo much Honour and Excellency as *Evangelizans* imports! that late good man and excellent Gre-

Grecian was in ſo high a degree his admirer, that thinking he deſerved better preferment than the firſt of the firſt rank of Poets, he would needs place him among the Goſpellers too. We are all apt to admire, then dote upon, and at length Idolize this or that part of Learning that hath moſtly engaged our Time, Labour, and Study: The reaſon is obvious, becauſe in that we can play a game to advantage with any Antagoniſt. So natural even to the beſt of men is Vain-glory. Not

Not but that I am a great admirer of Learning, and adore it at an awful diſtance almoſt to Superſtition: Learning, I ſay, not in hypothetick fancies, dry empty Notions, and fruitleſs reſearches, but in ſolid practical Truths, reductive to the ſervice of God, and the innocent profits and pleaſures of Humane Life. The reſt may be the diverſion and accompliſhment of ſuch as enjoy Wealth, Eaſe, and Vacancy: but for my part, I declare, I had rather feel the

the warmth of the Sun, when I am very cold, than know whether *Ptolomie*, *Tycho*, or *Copernicus* come neareſt the truth. For when Wiſe and Learned men are poor and hungry, (which God knows too often happens) I obſerve that they ſtudy more to find out a good Dinner, than the Longitude; and to Gompaſs a round ſum of Money, rather than to ſquare the Circle.

I obſerve too, that young men fledg'd and flown from their neſt of Notions in the Univerſity,

ty, when they come abroad quickly find, that Mathematical Demonſtrations, and Logical Axioms are the ſame neither *genere*, *ſpecie*, nor *numero*, with Meat, Drink, and Clothes; this engages them to a ſtudy of that which bears a nearer relation to ſelf-preſervation, and they (for the moſt part) take the old road of Mankind to purchaſe honeſt profit, and the Comforts of life, without much conſulting their old Acquaintances *Ariſtotle*, *Plato*, *Deſcartes*, or the like.

like. For as a Modern Satyriſt ſaith well in that,

Forcing our Nature never yet did good;
We muſt fall back to our old fleſh and blood.

This puts me in minde of the real diſgrace and detriment our Church ſuffers, by reaſon of the ſuperfluous number of young Divines; ſome with ſlender parts and mean Abilities; others without Experience and Conduct; and in theſe latter, a rude maſs of barren

ren unadjuſted Notions, gives ſuch an unſavory daſh, and ridiculous odd kind of Air to their diſcourſe and deportment, as always minds me of what *Charron* ſaith, *Faire quelque choſe en Clerk, c'eſt le faire en Sot.* De la Sageſſe Liv. 3. Chap. 13.

But the worſt is, that many are without Employment ſuitable to the great Character they bear, how ſlightly ſoever eſteemed of in our degenerate days. From each of theſe, many great miſchiefs and inconveniences follow.

How

How many are forced to take ſhelter as Tutours or Chaplains in ill-affected Families, where their Stipend being often Arbitrary, and their dependance almoſt neceſſary, they are obliged to do their work after what faſhion they pleaſe, in whoſe hands their Salary and livelihood wholly depends: And when they have ſerved the turn they were firſt entertained for here, (or perhaps for ſome little peeviſh *Caprice* of the Godly old Lady) they are

1 Sam. 2. 36.

are forced to march off with a cold Compliment: But if in this devout Family they have gotten ſome proficiencie in *Extempore* praying, prating pretty well without the Book, and the like, they are excellently appointed to be received into ſome blind Aſſembly or petty Conventicle, at leaſt as Probationers, and ſo on, *&c.*

Others again croſs the Channel, (preſuming, forſooth, that they may ſee faſhions on free-coſt) with *Omnia mea mecum porto*; but

but when Cold and Hunger pinches, and the *Philosophick* Portmantle comes to be examined, not one rag or ſingle ſtiver is to be found amongſt all *Bias*'s baggage. Then they are forced to expreſs their wants very politely in the univerſal Language, and (like Vagabond *Polanders* here) they beg *formâ pauperis Scholaſtici* at ſome Convent or Monaſtery; where (as the caſe now ſtands) the matter a hundred to one comes to a bargain, & they prove Converts: and

ſo

ſo having in time imbibed pernicious Principles, as well as learned the art of putting them in practice, fraught with miſchievous Machinations, and ſeditious deſigns, they are delegated hither.

But I fear the Air of old *England* doth not reduce one of twenty at their arrival to ſuch an happy reconverſion, as by eſpecial Influence it did the good Dr.

But a Maladie beyond all redreſs is the near dependance our Clergy have for the moſt part upon

upon Lay-Patrons and Benefactours: The ſervile awe and confuſion that poſſeſſes the young Divine whilſt he Preaches before them, is altogether inconſiſtent with that modeſt boldneſs and temperate Aſſurance that ought (of neceſſity) to attend the Word, whether we inform or reprove. For if by chance our youth touch never ſo little upon what thwarts the private opinion, or gauls any one irregular practice of his Patron (though in never ſo general and diſtant a way)

way) he ſhall be ſure of ſuch a ſowre look, and correcting regard from his Worſhip at Dinner, as ſhall quite daſh the Countenance, and turn the ſtomack of our new *dignifié*, maugre the comfortable acceſſion of the late Benefice.

In this Caſe I wiſh all men were as happy as my ſelf, in bearing relation to a moſt Orthodox, Loyal, and pious honourable good Gentleman, *&c.*

To conclude all this, our own Souldiers for want of due pay and encou-

couragement, turn often Renegadoes, and by deſerting us become ſo many freſh ſupplies to our ſworn Enemies the Pyrates of *Rome* and *Geneva*. This advantage (ſuperadded to the force of the old Piqne) enables them not only to fight at diſtance, but makes them ſo hardy as to board our torn and leaky veſſel, the poor Church of *England*; and 'tis all ſhe can do, with invincible courage to clear her decks of theſe furious Aſſailants.

I look upon the Romiſh Religion

Religion as the exacteſt piece of State-Policie, and the beſt contrived Myſterie of infallible Rule and Dominion, that ever yet appeared in the world. I always conſidered it under this notion, without any other regard or relation whatever: Its ſubtle tenets and deep Maximes ſpeak it ſuch; its ways and methods to preſerve and continue itſelf where 'tis already planted, and of propagating itſelf where not, do plainly ſhew, that the true deſign of it is merely Secu-

lar, contrived wholly for Temporal ends and purpoſes of Dominion, Avarice, Luſt, and in a word, of Univerſal Tyranny over the Souls and Bodies of Men and Women.

I verily believe its greateſt and moſt Learned Eccleſiaſtick Aſſertours ſee and know the trick well enough, though they keep the Myſterie as ſafe in the Conclave, as the *Trojans* did the *Palladium* in *Minerva*'s Temple.

No Cabaliſts of State could
e're trepan,
With ſuch firm ſubtlety as
Rome's *Divan*,
ſaith one.

And thus the main Syſtem of their Religion being wholly relative to Political practicks, no wonder that all our Diſputes ableſt Writings, and trueſt Remonſtrances againſt them do ſo little good: They may indeed debar them from proſelyting men ſo eaſily as before; but the two Poles ſhall ſooner

meet, than the ſtrongeſt Truths and Demonſtrations ſhall reduce one of the great Churchmen of *Rome.*

Alas, the Caſe is quite of another nature: nor do they themſelves think it worth while to enter the Liſts of publick Diſputation, or anſwer the repeated oppoſitions of our Learned Churchmen, unleſs (as our chief Diſſenters) it be to comply with the Expectations of their own Herd; and then too, the main deſign is (not to argue impartially and

and ſolidly) but ſtill more and more to amuſe and intangle the poor ignorant Admirers of, *An Anſwer to Dr.* &c.

Si Pergama dextrâ defendi poſſent, &c. comes always in my mind, when I conſider that the preſent poſture of affairs is rather worſe than better, and at the ſame time think on the Writings of Biſhop *Jewel*, *Laud*, and thoſe other Heroe's that did and ſaid all that was poſſible almoſt, to little purpoſe alas! and pray what can we do more?

They will not ſo much as argue to ſatisfie any ſcruple of their own Diſciples; the device of Implicite Faith ſuperſedes their trouble as to that. And if by chance among them a gaul'd Conſcience offer to kick, (though never ſo ſorely pinch'd) one ſharp word or frown of the Inquiſition, ſilences the poor Soul better (to their purpoſe) than a thouſand Syllogiſms: *And thus theſe men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil.*

How

How quite contrary to all this, is the proceed of our Church? how different is her Carriage? how frequent, earneſt, and tender are her applications to the Diſſenting Brethren? With what reluctancie and force to herſelf, (after all means fail) are reſtraints and penalties gently apply'd as the *Ratio ultima rerum*, which ſhe is far from making the Inſcription of loud and infallible Artillery?

And yet what Seditious Murmurs do theſe men re-

turn to her ſoft & paſſionate Invitations? What Innovations & Changes do they not ſecretly attempt? What evil Repreſentations of Church and Government do they not ſcatter? What ſhuffling peeviſh returns do they make to the Writings and Sermons of good and wiſe Men, in vindication of regular Piety and true Loyalty? And they are ſo bold too, as to preſs Gods holy Word for the juſtification of all this obſtinacy; but 'tis not the firſt time that Holy Scripture

ture hath been the Argument, when the deſtruction of the Allegatour hath proved the consequence. 2 Pet. 3. 16.

Our Church, by applying the ſoft and gentle Remedies of Statutable puniſhments, and legal Mulcts, never intended to force groſs blindneſs, or impoſe the Tyranny of Implicite Faith on any man; but rather the quite contrary, ſhe carefully and wiſely conſidered that a little ſmarting might make the ſcales peel off from their Eyes,

& by ſome little bitterneſs ſhe deſigned no more harm to them, than *Tobias* did to his Father, by throwing Gall in his Eyes to make him ſee.

And here I'll preſume to inſert the words of a Learned & Reverend Gentleman now among us: *We*, ſaith he, *that are Miniſters of the Church of* England *may be content; nay, we may really wiſh that all our Laity had as much true ſolid underſtanding in Religion as our Clergy. We can get no advantage by your want of knowledge,*

no

no more than you can do by ours: We have no Spiritual Cheat with which to delude you, for the repreſenting of which we ſhould ſtand in need either of darkneſs, or of a falſe light. We have nothing in our publick Profeſſion which the wiſeſt men, the moſt pious Chriſtians may not outwardly practice; nothing in our Faith which they ought not inwardly to believe. We know and are well aſſured, that the onely reaſon why our Church is not more generally embraced, and admired,

mired, is, becauſe the purity of its Doctrine, the ſobriety of its Devotion, the moderation of its Diſcipline, the largeneſs of its Charity, are not more impartially and calmly examined, more generally underſtood.

Our Church in its Spiritual State as you are Chriſtians, is moſt conformable to the rules of Chriſt, to the Apoſtolick practice, to the Primitive Inſtitutions: In its rational State as you are Men, its Doctrines are very agreeable to the reaſon of Man-

Mankind; its Precepts moſt becoming the pureſt and ſtricteſt Laws of Nature, Vertue, and Morality: In its Political State as ye are Engliſhmen, *its Intereſt is inſeparable from that of our Nation and Government.*

We are therefore ſo far from being jealous of your moſt curious & exact ſearch into the Practice and Principles of our Church, that we deſire it; nay, we moſt earneſtly beſeech it. We are in no danger from Mens moſt ſubtle inquiry into it; we may be from their

their utter careleſneſs, and indifferency towards it.

We are not againſt any Mans ſeeing Spiritual Truths; onely we would not have the blind preſume to teach others to ſee: We would not have Men think they ſee, when they do not, which is the moſt certain way for them never to ſee at all: we would have you know as much as you can; onely we would have you believe that both you and we may know much more than we do: we intreat you to ſtrive to know all in a right

right way, by ſober degrees, for right purpoſes, uſes and ends. Dr. *Sprats* Sermon at *Whitehall* before His Majeſty.

I will here be bold to ſubjoin by way of Corollary to the fore-going excellent words: It hath puzled my neareſt and niceſt Inquiſition, and plunged my cloſeſt ſcrutiny in deep amazement, when I have conſidered that ſo many of our Countrymen ſhould out of an odd peeviſh humour, and moſt unaccountable Caprice, forſake that ſober, decent way

way of Worſhip, which the Eſtabliſhed Law preſſes, which their gracious King and Governour himſelf ſtrictly obſerves, together with the Loyal Nobility and Gentry, and the Reverend and Learned Clergy of this Land; that they ſhould (I ſay) leave theſe good, theſe great, theſe wiſe Examples, contrary to the obedient humble temper of Chriſtians, contrary to the prudence and intereſt of rational men, and contrary to the honeſt good nature of true Engliſhmen:

men: And all this out of a blind and ignorant complyance to the Inſinuating hypocritical perſwaſions of a few leading prejudiced Presbyters. For, true ſcruple of Conſcience cannot be ſaid to urge them to this Nonconformity; not one of five hundred underſtanding the intrinſick ſtate of the Queſtion, or the true nature of the Controverted point, any more than they do *Arabick*: But granting that they could plead Chriſtian Scruple, how far would even that

fall

fall ſhort of Juſtification, ſeeing that the commands to Obedience are ſo abſolute, ſo plain, ſo poſitive, and the reaſons for Nonconformity (even at beſt) ſo obſcure, ſo weak, ſo dubious? In a word, the Faith of our Separatiſts is as blind and implicite as that of the Papiſts; the deſign of their Doctrines as Subtle, Senſual, and Secular.

But to return to the Romaniſts: that the trick ſhould paſs upon the common Herd of the Ignorant and Credulous, is not

not at all ſtrange, nor that the well-contriv'd Impoſture ſhould go down pretty cleverly with the middle ſort of Mankind, is it much to be wondred at; but that ſo notorious, ſo bold, ſo ſawcie a cheat, ſhould engage the Wiſe and Noble, nay Kings and Princes, to a complyance ſo mean and ſervile (as heretofore eſpecially) this is a perfect Prodigie to me.

What depth of ſubtilty is implyed in the Doctrine of the Popes Supremacy and Infallibility, the

basis of implicite Faith, indisputable obedience,& absolute dependance on the Church and Court of *Rome?* What great and glorious Scenes of pomp, pride, and splendour, are consequential to the necessity of making all deferences and humble appeals to his Holiness?

The Doctrine of Purgatory is a most excellent bait for a wealthy sinner on his death-bed: how eagerly and zealously he exchanges his Bags for Masses, that he may not be stopt at that hot stage

ſtage, but be immediately diſpatch'd to the more agreeable warmth of *Abraham*'s boſom? Thus by a pretty kind of Platonick Chymiſtry, the ſubtle Prieſt makes real Gold, by an imaginary & fictitious fire.

But above all, to dive into and diſcover the Tempers and Inclinations, Deſigns and Contrivances, Actions and Paſſions, nay the moſt retired Thoughts of Men and Women, Auricular Confeſſion is an unparallel'd device: 'Tis certainly the moſt impudent Incroach-

ment and unnatural piece of Tyranny that was ever impos'd on Mankind; I mean, as 'tis abuſed and disfigured by them, from its firſt good deſigne and Inſtitution.

I will now end theſe brief Remarks on the *Romiſh* Religion, with one Trick more of theirs, which appeared in the Death of Mr. *Langhorne* and the late Jeſuits; which hath afforded matter of much diſcourſe to all, and of no ſmall wonder and amuſement to ſome. For my own part, I verily be-

lieve,

lieve, that if the Depoſitions of the King's Witneſſes (as the Law always allows and ſuppoſes them to be, ſo) were not *de facto* true and evident; if the Proceedings of the *Court* were not moſt impartial, juſt and ſteady, and by conſequence the Parties brought in guilty by an honeſt and unbiaſſed Verdict; if all this (I ſay) were not ſo, then there is no Truth or Certainty under the Sun. And therefore that Learned and Rational Men ſhould at the point of Death fondly

conceive, that any Diſpenſation from *Rome*, or their reciprocal Abſolutions, could poſſibly expiate the Guilt and Crime of a poſitive, deliberate, mortal ſin (I mean, the ſtedfaſt Abjuration of true matter of Fact) this is a Preſumption of that Force and Contradiction to the *Genius* of Chriſtianity, and ſo contrary to the very Eſſentials and Fundamentals of Humane Nature, that I know not what to reſolve it into, but a total dereliction of God Almighty, or ſome latent

Frenzy

Frenzy in thoſe wretched Delinquents.

I have indeed heard ſome Learned Men urge the ſtrong force of Education and Inſtitution, as a competent cauſe to rivet this Principle into the perſwaſions of the *Romiſh Agents:* What e're it is, it affords matter of myſterious difficulty to me; and what Principle ſoever it owns, certainly the reſolute Effects it produces, muſt needs belong to a very forcible Cauſe, ſince we ſee this firm Obſtinacy retains its Vigour

in Attempts of the laſt danger, and at the dreadful point of unavoidable Death too.

'Tis true, that the Biſhop and Spiritual Senate of *Rome* exhibit all the *Machiavilian Maximes*, (which they without exception call in to eſtabliſh and advance their *Secular and Eccleſiaſtick Politie*) under the ſpecious ſtamp of Divine Authority, and crown the moſt horrid Enterprizes and unnatural Villanies with the additional advantage of *Merit*; this (if firmly believed,

believed, but there lies the difficulty) must needs infuse as much Courage and Resolution, as the *Arabian Elysium* did into the Primitive *Assassins*, or *Mahomet*'s Paradise doth into the *Ottoman* Souldiers. For Superstition of this kinde deeply grafted, hath always proved the strongest spring and most vigorous motive of desperate deeds and devices: Besides, the indisputable Obedience that the *Jesuitick Order* is sworn into to their respective Superiour, is of no ordinary

force and influence to these Exploits, and of grand import to the purposes of the *Roman Conclave.*

And this suggests how furiously in opposition to this extreme of blinde compliance, some of our present Fanaticks run into the other contrary, and flatly deny that there is any Ecclesiastick Superiority at all; others affirm that the *Episcopal* Function is at best distinct, not in Degree and Fact, but in Title and Dignity only, to that of Presbyter; contrary

trary to the plain uſage of the Catholick Church, and the practice of Antiquity in all Ages. And with theſe men forſooth ἐπίσκοπος is no more of Divine Right, than the little Office of *Overſeer* (its nameſake) in ſome of our *Parochial* Societies.

The redreſs of this, as of other crazy Opinions of our modern *Sectaries*, is apparently *Eccentrick* to the power and force of Argument; the proper Remedy and effectual Cure belonging moſt certainly to a ſmarter Appli-

cation, than that of ſoft and gentle Reaſonings.

And now 'tis high time to tell you, how that by theſe briet occaſional remarks on the corruptions of Chriſtianity from the Ambition and Avarice of ſome *Profeſſors*, from *Enthuſiaſtick* whimſies, from the ſenceleſs Subtleties of the *Schoolmen* and *Caſuiſts*, from ſome cramp words and forc'd Alluſions out of *Ariſtotle*, from the *Romiſh* Impoſtures, and *Phanatick* Hypocriſie, I have at leaſt hit my deſigne in the Negative, by which

which you may gueſs of what Religion I am not of.

Truely, I am heartily ſorry that the true Tree of Life, Chriſtianity, ſhould be branched out into ſo many Diviſions, and that our grand *Enemy* hath not only *ſowed tares in our field*, but inſerted ſpurious graffs here too: however, my firm and faithful dependence is on that Branch which hath an undeniable riſe and growth from the old Catholick and Apoſtolick ſtock, and from whence (*Zacheus*-like)

Luke 19.4,5. I have a Call (I hope) as well as a full and perfect View of my bleſſed Saviour, from amongſt the vulgar crowd of Schiſms and Hereſies: In a word, I am not ſo much of Education, much leſs of Intereſt or Coaction, as of free, yet firm and rational choice, a Member of the Church of *England*, as now by Law eſtabliſht.

And yet Education, by an *Epidemick* Calamity, hath in all Countreys and Ages been the beſt Title perhaps, that the *Bulk* of Mankinde could plead to their

their Religion: That 'tis ſo now amongſt the *grand Monde* of Mahometans, Jews and Pagans, is I think not to be diſputed. And indeed the difficulties are ſo great, and the methods ſo nice of diſengaging natural Reaſon from the ſtrong entanglements of Prejudice, Education, and National Intereſt, that I think it to be almoſt morally impoſſible (all circumſtances weighed) for theſe Infidels to raiſe and refine their groſs Apprehenſions to a due and ſober Scrutiny of Chriſtian Truths:

Truths: And therefore to talk to them of the Trinity, Incarnation, Crucifixion, Reſurrection, and the like other Myſteries of our Religion, would but produce the ſame incredulous wonder, as to repeat and plead for ſome Fables in the *Metamorphoſis.*

For if the ripe reaſon of learned *Nicodemus* (in the very midſt of Miracles) could at beſt but arrive to a doubtful Queſtion, *Joh.* 3. 9. *How can theſe things be?* puzzled (as appears) by the one only Doctrine

Doctrine of Regeneration; if he could hardly reliſh theſe *Living Waters* at the Fountain-head, well may the Streams run muddy through our ſhallow conveyances, and prove inſipid, if not nauſeous and ridiculous to theſe ſenceleſs, ſtupid mortals.

What ſhall we judge then of the groſs and maſs of mankinde, who lye under prejudice or Ignorance invincible? What diſtinct Regions of Immortality can we aſſigne to many millions of the ſo long un-

undiſcovered *Americans?* Amongſt whom were found not only the common Rules, but ſtrict obſervances too of Juſtice, Veracity and Sobriety?

Montaign

In what claſſis and degree of Felicity or Miſery can we range the good old Heathens *Socrates*, *Seneca*, &c. who living up to the height of their Principles (as ſome think, thô I have good reaſon to doubt it) were *a Law unto themſelves.* There is no other name given among men, whereby

Rom. 2. 14.

whereby we muſt beſaved, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, but the Name of *Jeſus*, Act. 4.12. What, ſhall we fondly feign a middle ſtate, a *Limbus Philoſophorum* ? For 'tis uncharitable to conclude abſolutely and cruelly, that the Merciful Good God will deſtroy the work of his own Hands.

Perhaps the moſt rational refuge in this caſe, is to preſume, that our gracious Father by ways beſt known to himſelf, might impart (if not a Revelation, yet) an Application of

of the Name and Merits of the holy Jesus to these just and sober *Moralists*, if they were indeed really so.

But as to my unspeakable Peace and Comfort I am *a Christian* of the Church of *England*; so to my inestimable honour and glory, I am *a Priest* of the most High God, and received my *Authority* and Commission from my Lord and Master Jesus, rightly and truely, by the hands of *Episcopacy* and the *Presbytery*.

And as I then felt no unusual

unuſual Impulſes of an *extraordinary Spirit*, no new Light or Revelation, nor any other *Enthuſiaſtick Emotions* of an over-heated Imagination: ſo neither did I rudely and raſhly intrude without Call, amongſt my Maſters hired Labourers: For I had a fair Invitation from Gods ordinary Goodneſs and Providence to work in his Vineyard, and I found in my ſelf an honeſt Reſolution and hearty Inclination ſo to do; which truely I lookt upon as a ſufficient warrant and juſtification for

for my Affirmative Anſwer to that firſt *Ordination*-Queſtion, *Do you think in your heart that you be truely called*, &c. *to the Order and Miniſtry of Prieſthood?*

And now as I verily believe this divine *Character* to be indelible, ſo I eſteem of it as the moſt noble ſtamp and Impreſs humane Nature is capable of, whilſt cloathed with clay. I am not ſo much ſurprized as troubled, to ſee the common deriſion and contempt that attends the Clergy: For thoſe

Scorners

Scorners that cavil at the very *Faith*, and queſtion the *Doctrine* itſelf, cannot reaſonably be expected to regard and reverence the *Diſpenſers*. And ſince this *Town* and *Kingdome* is infeſted with ſuch ſwarms of *Deiſts*, *Socinians*, *Atheiſts*, and others, that not only violate the undoubted *Regalia*, but with treaſonable Blaſphemy diſpute the Divine *Sovereignty* of *Jeſus*; how ſhould they not affront and outrage the *Ambaſſadours* of Chriſt? We are, I fear, making fair *Advances*,

Advances, and by very ſenſible degrees too, to that diſmal ſtate of *Infidelity*, the proſpect of which made our Saviour exclaim long ago, *When the Son of Man cometh, ſhall he finde* Faith *upon Earth?* Luk. 18. 8.

And yet I have obſerved, that our Adverſaries raiſe much of their pertneſs and audacity to deſpiſe and abuſe us, from a certain *ſheepiſh dejection* of ſpirit that poſſeſſes many: Thus we our ſelves, by a baſe and daſtardly Cowardiſe, antedate our own

own contempt, and poorly fancying our ſelves always liable and open to affront, like ſuſpicious eaſie Slaves, we (by this means) become of our Enemies party, and invite and anticipate the approaching *Deſpight*, by letting our Countenances fall, and ſeeming little in our own Eyes: This is exactly to make a gap for every inſolent pragmatical Aſs to tread over. Inſtances of this kinde I have not ſeldom ſeen in ſome mean-ſpirited, poor Divines, whoſe little Souls ebbe and flow with the changes

ges of Fortune, and who want a true ſenſe of the Excellency and Noble worth of their high Calling, ſervilely valuing themſelves by the falſe meaſures of this ſilly, unreaſonable, degenerate Age. I finde that a man in this caſe hath juſt as much reſpect as he gives himſelf; and a manly Confidence and well-bred Aſſurance here, is not at all inconſiſtent with Chriſtian Meekneſs and Humility. But alas! We have too many creep into the Prieſthood, and ſteal into the

the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the Chriſtian Tabernacle, *young* and *raw*, hardly yet Maſters of common Philoſophy, but in fruitleſs *Theory*; nor are they arrived to the proficiency of the poor *Stoicks*, in oppoſing a ſtedfaſt Courage and Equality of Soul to the rude *ſhock* of Contempt and Poverty: How then ſhall they retain Breath and Patience ſufficient to run through thoſe ſeveral rugged ſtages of Self denial and Mortification, which the proud and inſolent dealing of this

world requires, and the Doctrine of Jesus proposes? *Contempt*, *Poverty*, and *Death*, (that dreadful *Triumvirate* of mundane Terrours) which the courageous Reason of the old Philosophers cou'd baffle, is too hard for the Reason and Faith too of many *fresh-water* Souldiers in our Church-Militant.

'Tis possible, 'tis true, for a wise man by a steady course of manly conduct to escape Contempt; but the approaches of Poverty are often unavoidable, and the rudeness

neſs of its attendants almoſt inſufferable. This ſtate and condition (eſpecially if ſucceſſive to late Wealth and Honour) is the beſt *Teſt* and Touchſtone of true worth and *Magnanimity:*

Hic animus opus, hic pectore firmo. Virg. Æneid. l. 6.

'Tis an eaſie matter, when full of Riches and Honour, to fancy we have all Vertues; and the fawning world ſhall avouch it too.

— *Omnis enim res*
Divitiis parent, quas, qui conſtruxerit, ille

Clærus erit, fortis, juſtus, ſapiens, &c. Horat. ſerm. lib. 2. Satyr. 3.

Yet I fear, not one of five hundred that rowls in wealth and affluence, hath well *Conned* the hard *Leſſon* which the honeſt *Stoicks* taught in their ἀπέχε. But granting we have arrived to ſome proficiency in the *Abſtinential* Vertues, we muſt not therefore conclude our ſelves truely approved, till we have tried our Strength and Patience to the quick in the ſharp exerciſes of Vertues other branch,

branch, the *Tolerantial* part, the ἀνέχου alſo: or, till with St. *Paul* we can truely ſay, *I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need*, Philip. 4. 12.

With what *Aſſuming* Gravity and *Magiſterial* Awe have I heard rich and great men cenſure and expoſe ſmall miſcarriages and weakneſſes in poor and mean Perſons; when at that very time, the *Reprover* himſelf hath been guilty of the ſame Crime,

and greater too, with ſome little Alteration of the guiſe only; nay, and the advantage ſhall be ſo dexterouſly managed on his ſide, as to make it Vertue and *accompliſhment.*

Vos ô Trojugenæ vobis ignoſcitis, & quæ
Turpia Cerdoni Voleſos, Brutóſque decebunt. Juven. Sat. 8.

And thus the rich and honourable have not only all Vertues (of courſe) in the Vogue of the world; but they fancie themſelves very devout and religious too;

too; at leaſt if their odde kinde of Faith can make them ſo; for they pray moſt commomly without doubting, eſpecially when they ſay, *Give us this day our daily bread,* (knowing their Barns to be full;) *and forgive us,* &c. *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*, when they finde that no man dares affront them.

But to harbour no anxious ſollicitude for the morrow, nor in extreme and helpleſs Poverty to entertain any peeviſh diſtruſt of Divine Provi-

dence, but to have a chearful Faith and reliance on my Heavenly Father, this is Religion: And freely and frequently to forgive my Lives aggreſſour, or the malicious diſturber of my peace, without any the leaſt reſerve of Revenge or Rancour, this is Chriſtianity.

Mat. 6.

I have been too much intimate (in vain youth) with the moſt *familiar* Pleaſures of humane Nature; and yet by ſudden and frequent *Intermixtures*, as well acquainted with

with the Troubles and Croſſes of this fickle and unconſtant world: But, I thank my God, when *Fortune* hath made the moſt Vexatious *Doubles*, ſhe could never run me to a loſs; nor hath ſhe made one wrinckle of Sorrow or Fear the more in my face, when ſhe hath turned her own into a thouſand frightful *Grimaces*. I declare ingenuouſly, that my Soul hath ever kept a ſteady Poiſe, (*if not enclin'd to the impatience of Proſperity*) and the moſt *ſtunning*

Accidents never *benum'd* my preſence of minde ſo far, but that I have perfectly *reaſſured* my ſelf, ſoftned the moſt *piquant* Paſſion, and ſmoothed the rougheſt diſorder of thought, by an hours *Retreat* and Meditation, ſaying with old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3.18. Or to the ſame purpoſe with the wiſe *Stoick*,

Ἄφες δή με ὦ Ζεῦ, ὅπου ποτή στι εἰμὶ διατεταγμένος, Epict.

To end all this, in my very worſt Calamities, I always concluded, that there

there was need of the greateſt Courage; for then to dëſpond, is to be on my Enemies ſide, and by my faint reſiſtance to double the force of the Aſſault: but to deſpair is Frenſie, and poorly to yield the ſtakes, before the Game is up. For what an extreme Madneſs is it to be frighted with the advantages on the contrary ſide, ſuppoſing ten thouſand to one againſt me? Why (pray) may not that one ſtill happen? *No man is undone, till he thinks himſelf ſo. Ita eſt vita ho-*

minum quaſi cum ludas teſſeris, ſi id quod maximè opus eſt jactu non cadit, id quod cecidit fortè, arte ut corrigas. Terent.

There is no doubt, but the chiefeſt, if not only deſigne of our Prieſtly Miniſtry, is that which our bleſſed Saviour by moſt paſſionate inculcations urged to *Peter*, *Joh.* 21. 17. To feed God's ſheep. And to this end, the frequency of the Word, and Sacramental Duties, of Prayer alſo, often publick, without ceaſing private, is of indiſpenſable Neceſſity: 'Tis

'Tis we more eſpecially, that are to make Prayers and Supplications for all men, for Kings, and for thoſe who are in Authority: 'Tis we that muſt make Interceſſion for the People, when God's Judgments are abroad; 'tis we that muſt with Faith and Courage ſtand in the gap, when Wrath is gone out from the Lord, and the Plague is begun, *Numb.* 16. 48. 'Tis we that muſt be always ready to give a reaſonable account of our Hope, and with undaunted 1 *Ti.* 2. 2

ted arguings urge the Doctrine and Faith of Christ (to some now a days a Stumbling-block, to others Fooliſhneſs, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15.) againſt the growing oppoſitions of Atheiſm, Hereſie and Prophaneneſs. 'Tis we that muſt Preach plain, practical Truths to the people, with the Rules and Fundamental Reaſons of Obedience, Juſtice, Sobriety, Charity; and all this in eaſie and familiar (yet powerful) Applications; not in *Rhetorical Harangue*, or Affectation of Speech and Geſture, which

which doth but make the ignorant gape, and tickles the Ears of the more knowing; producing perhaps a plauſible perſwaſion in the one, but ſcarce true Chriſtian Edification in either; and better becomes the old *Roman Roſtrum*, than the Chriſtian *Pulpit.*

And ſince the unreaſonable Prejudice of people ſeems now adays to make it almoſt neceſſary, we ſhould endeavour to obtain the Cuſtom and Habit of talking to them in a familiar way of converſe

as

as it were,(*ſalvâ majeſtate verbi*) and (if it may be) wholly without Book.

'Tis true, that when the Preachers Eyes and Geſtures are pointed directly to the Auditory, they are the more likely to give their regards and attentions to him: but again, 'tis ſtrange to me, that theſe ſilly Souls ſhould fancy, that the effects of a nimble Invention and *unſteady curſory Effuſion* to be more the Word of God, than the beſt of a mans ſober thoughts ſquared exactly by the Holy Scripture,

Scripture, in Methodick Writing. Matters of Controverſie we ought wholly to decline; for, (beſides that 'tis eaſie to prate where there is none to oppoſe) the people would be kept more obedient and ſafe, if they could altogether be kept ignorant that there is any oppoſition in any kinde to the truth of our Doctrines: beſides, what neceſſity is there of telling them (to their dangerous *amuſement*) what is wrong, as long as we continue them in the right Belief and Practice

practice of what we know to be true and right?

But now I better think on't, ſince our *Schiſmatical* Diſſenters *Compaſs Sea and Land to make one Proſelyte*, Mat. 23.15. and indefatigably take all opportunities by partial and detracting miſrepreſentations to tell their own Tale firſt, to our no ſmall diſadvantage; it might be perhaps of ſome good conſequence, if our Loyally-affected Miniſters would take frequent Occaſions (not in their publick Pulpits, but) in their ordi-

ordinary familiar Communications with their Pariſhioners, to explain and enlarge upon ſuch Points of Publick Duty, and ſound Belief, as theſe few following; that the good People might be diſabuſed from the inſinuating Cheats and Impoſtures of theſe *deal-board Mountebanks*, and diſſwaded from giving their Money for that which is not Bread, *Iſai.* 55. 2.

I. That the Power and Authority of Kings, is from God.

II. That Prerogative is ac-

accountable to none but God, *Pſal.* 51. 4. But Property and Priviledge in many caſes forfeitable to the Crown.

III. That to Depoſe Kings for fear of Arbitrary Government, is as unjuſt as to ſuppoſe a man felonioufly-affected, and ſo hang him afore-hand, leſt he ſhould Steal or Murder.

IV. That to draw Arguments from Precedents, and conclude *de facto ad jus*, is as unjuſt a proceeding in Politicks, as 'tis often in Law.

V. That

V. That to fear Arbitrary Government, or its Tyrannical Effects, in a King of Great *Britain*, is to ſuppoſe a Moral Impoſſibility.

VI. That the Kingly Government of theſe Realms, as 'tis contemper'd with the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, is the happieſt Policy in the world.

VII. That *Major ſingulis, minor univerſis*, is bad Logick and worſe Divinity, 2 *Sam.* 18. 3.

VIII. That 'tis unlawful upon any pretence what-

whatſoever, for the Subject to take up Arms againſt the King.

IX. That Rebellious Innovations always end in Confuſion and Anarchy; and redreſs of Grievances that way, hath proved worſe than the Diſeaſe.

X. That the Church of *England* (as now by Law eſtabliſh'd) retains the true Catholick and Apoſtolick Faith.

XI. That our Gracious Sovereign is in all Cauſes Eccleſiaſtical (as well as Temporal) Supreme Governour.

XII.

XII. That a Subjects wiſeſt and ſureſt way is to adhere to the Eſtabliſh'd Religion (in theſe Kingdoms) without the leaſt Cavil or Diſpute, if he believes he may be ſaved therein.

XIII. That no pretence of ſcruple whatſoever, without plain proofs and demonſtration, can excuſe any Subject from the poſitive Commands to abſolute Obedience in all things Lawful or Indifferent.

XIV. That Separate Meetings, and Fanatical Conven-

Conventicles, have been known lurking-holes and refuges of *Romiſh* Prieſts and Jeſuits, and (of conſequence) Nurſeries of Actors upon the Stage of Rebellion.

XV. That, upon an exact review, we have great reaſon to conclude our preſent diviſions to belong to a Principle very different from that of Scruple and Tenderneſs.

XVI. That Ambition and Avarice are the two great Wheels of the Devils Chariot.

XVII. That when our

our grand Adverſary deſigns moſt Miſchief, he always hangs out the white Flag of Religion.

XVIII. That Liberty of Conſcience commonly proves Licence to be Seditious.

XIX. That our Diſſenting Zealots who plead for it moſt, have been obſerved to grant it leaſt.

XX. That the People of this Nation are acquainted with much more than they ſhould know, and much leſs than they ſhould practiſe.

XXI. That we can ne-

ver have peaceable days, as long as Bulkers and Coblers are Preachers and Couranters.

XXII. That *Vox Populi* is not always *Vox Dei*, Mat. 27. 22.

XXIII. That the Stool of Repentance and illegal Impositions of Oaths on King and People, is a greater piece of Arbitrary Tyranny, than *French* Monarchy, or Kissing of the Pope's Toe.

XXIV. That the Kingly Government of this Nation is equally inconsistent

ſiſtent with Popery and Preſbytery.

XXV. That the Power and Riches of the King is the Peace and Proſperity of the People.

XXVI. That 'tis impoſſible for Peace and Godlineſs to continue long in Church or State, under a general Toleration of Schiſmatical and Factious Opinions in matters of Religion, *Mat.* 12. 25.

Theſe ſhort *Aphoriſms* I preſume to inſert by way of *Eſſay* only, and as imperfect *Hints* of what

wiſer Heads and abler Judgments may do in ſtronger and more ſuitable *Applications* to the good *People* of this diſtracted Kingdome.

But before I wholly leave this point, it may be worth while to obſerve, by what an ignorant, ſilly Miſtake, the *dull Teachers* in our Separate *Aſſemblies* conclude of the Power and Prevalency of their Doctrine, from the ſullen *cloudineſs* of Countenance, and *tumultuous* diſorder it cauſes in the Paſſions of their Female *Auditory*,

Anditory, rather than from any *Serenity* and clearneſs of Minde and Underſtanding: For I have very good grounds to believe, that all this noiſe hath left the *Intellect* untoucht, and that it hath not in any degree reacht the *Seat* of their Reaſon and Judgment. And thus ſuch *Artiſts* as can beſt by tender Expreſſions, and paſſionate Applications, *ſoften*, *mellow* and *diſſolve* the *looſe* and eaſie Paſſions of ſilly Women, are (forſooth) the only able, *powerful men*, and they

(good Souls!) can *Edifie* under none but them: When alas, all this ſeeming effectual Operation, is no better than juſt thus; *viz.* the *whining Holderforth* and the Female Congregation being at that time *tuned* (like *two Viols*) exactly alike by the *Magick of Enthuſiaſtick Sympathy*, their *Notes* correſpond of courſe, and the *Canting* of the one immediately begets Sighs and Groans in the other.

I am of opinion, that the higheſt *Paroxyſms* of Vulgar *Quakeriſme* have much

much the ſame Cauſe, as *Dancing* to Muſick in Fits of the *Tarantula:* For I have with pity and pleaſure both obſerv'd, that the malignant *Ferment* hath been by degrees exhaled by their violent *Sudorifick* motions; and when the poor Soul hath ſpent his Spirits, and is tyred at his very heart, then (as he fancies) the *Spirit* goes off and leaves *working.* And I am inclined too to think, that the *cooler* habits of this Religious *diſeaſe* in many of them are to be cured

by *Medicinal Drugs*, and a regular courſe of *Pill*, *Potion* and *Phlebotomy*.

A timely *Viſitation* of the Sick, as 'tis a charitable duty almoſt neceſſary, ſo it belongs as properly to the Function of a Prieſt, as to the Profeſſion of a Phyſician; and the careful Viſits of a Ghoſtly Father ſhould (of right) be more welcome and comfortable, and accounted of higher import, as the care of our Souls ought to be of dearer concern to us than that of our frail Bodies: and yet with us,

us, *Ubi desinit Medicus, ibi incipit Theologus*, is a common woful practice. For my own part, I should think my self obliged by a timelier *Assistance* to minde my ghostly *Patient* of the dangers of his long *Journey*, urge him to hearty Confession, give him comfortable *Absolution*, and Communicate to him the strengthening *Viaticum* of the Body and Blood of the Adorable Jesus. How busie the restless malice of the *Enemy* of Mankinde may be at this time to insinuate *Suggestions* of De-

ſpair, or preſumptuous hopes of longer Life, into Sick perſons, I know not; but ſurely I am bound to examine the caſe, and by ſeaſonable *Anticipations* prevent (at leaſt) the ſucceſs of *Satan*'s devices.

That the Devil by *Injection* can *modifie* our Thoughts, and in a great meaſure rule the Faculties, (eſpecially of weak ſick perſons, who are now more retired within themſelves, and free from the ſenſible *amuſements* and diverſions of worldly objects) I verily believe; for he

he may make a very malicious and miſchievous uſe of the advantages he hath over our Souls (himſelf being a ſubtle, powerful *Spirit*,) and (therefore) by *eminency* of like nature, may have a very forcible *Influence* upon the Operations of our Spirit; as (to take a parallel *Analogy* from what appears in *matter*, the contrary eſſence) the *Preſſure* or *Colliſion* of a ſtronger body alters (we ſee) the *Figure* of Extenſion in a weaker; or as the *dimenſion* of ſoft Wax is (by my

my hands) now *ſquare*, then *round*, and preſently *triangular* or *oblong*.

Now the Advantages of theſe frequent Viſits will not only be ſo to the Sick, but will produce in us forcible habits of undaunted Indifferencie againſt the Fears and Apprehenſions of Death in general, and the nearer *Approaches* of it too, when our ſelves are aſſaulted. Our moſt proper *Titles* are *Ghoſtly*, *Spiritual*, and ſuch like; to intimate, that 'tis our *Trade* to be familiarly preſent and frequently aſſiſtant at Nature's

ture's *grand Diſſection* of Soul and Body: It will the better improve our *Theologick* Knowledge and Skill, as an accurate diligence in *Anatomick* Exerciſes doth that of the *Chirurgick*; beſides that the company of a Divine Phyſician ſuits well with the Soul, as ſhe is ready to be *diſmantled* of her walls of fleſh, and tranſmitted to the better *Colony* of the new *Jeruſalem.*

To men of our Function, the ſight of Death ſhould be no more terrible than

than that of our Breath; and we may be ashamed, that our profest hopes of the Bodies Resurrection, and the immediate Felicity of our Soul, falls short of the courageous *Gallantry* of many Heathens, in braving the ghastly *King of Terrours* to his very face, upon no better or very little more assurance of Immortality, than that of surviving *Fame* and *Glory*, or a fruitless *Nomen erit indelebile nostrum.*

I have known some of us, that not want of Christian Charity, but Courage (in this

this point)hath with-held from paying their laſt dutiful Offices to Sick perſons; and when a ſilly common *Nurſe* ſhall attend alone in ſilent, diſmal Night-*watches*, theſe men could not approach in open day, without apparent *damps* of *Conſternation.* And yet 'tis (doubtleſs) as natural to die as to live, or as 'tis to be born: and the ſight of *a Coffin* alters me no more than that of *a Cradle.* Certainly, if the ſtrange appearance of the object ſtartled us, a ſilly *Midwife* hath

hath greater reaſon to be ſcared at the *odde* and *uncouth* Circumſtances that accompany Natures *thruſting* a Child into the world, than we in duely preparing a departing man or woman for the familiar *Womb* of our common *Mother.*

I finde little more ſurprize or alteration in my ſelf at the ſight of a deceaſed Man, than of any other dead *Animal:* Nay, why ſhould I not (on the contrary) be much more amazed at this, than that? Since this is an abſolute

object of *irreparable Mortality*, and a total *Privation* appears here; in the other, of one *Moiety* only, and that but to the general *Reſurrection.*

'Tis Opinion, not Reaſon or Religion, rules men. Dying hath been the common *trade* and way of all fleſh, for almoſt *Six thouſand years*; and more dye by *Weekly Computation* than are born: Nay, this *Champion* hath made one ſingle Field ſuch a glorious Scene of his Pomp and Luxury, that 500000 Spectacles of Mortality have

have been at once offered as *Victims* to the insatiate Fury of one bloudy Battle, 2 *Chron.* 13.17. And in such a small *Circumscription* of time and place as this, I suppose we never heard, nor ever shall, of an equal number of *Nativities.*

To me *to dye is gain*, saith St. *Paul*, Phil. 1. 21. which besides an *Enfranchisement* and release from the many troubles of this Life, and the acquisition of eternal Joy, doth also import to me, That by Death and Separation this

Concrete

Concrete becomes two *diſtinct Eſſences*; and we are ſo far from vaniſhing into *nothing*, that by the advantageous diviſion of Soul and Body, one ſingle Being branches into a *duplicity of Exiſtences*. For our *Corps*, thô ſilent and unactive in the cold *Lap of common Fate*, looſes not a whit of its title to *Exiſtence*; nay, even in this *ghaſtly Privation*, there ſtill appear ſome weak remains and faint *efforts* of *a Vegetative* Soul.

But our *Spirit ſhall mount up like an Eagle*,

Iſai.

Isai. 40. 31. on the wings of celestial activity, and greedily grasp all the pleasures of *a perfect Intelligence*, ranging at large in the infinite *Abyss* of immortal Light & boundless Aboads of Angels. There she will clearly discern the nature of her own *Essence* and *Faculties* by *reflex* Intuition on her self; or else (perhaps) see the perfect Image of her self, and of all things past, present and to come (to her infinite satisfaction) in the glorious *Mirrour* of the Eternal Godhead. Nor will

will ſhe then owe her knowledge to the groſs Communications of material objects, through the weak *conveyances* of bodily ſenſe.

I could (in ſome fits of contemplative Melancholy) fall aſleep aſſoon in a *Charnel*-houſe, as in my *Bed-chamber*; and am often ſo weary of dull Life, that my greateſt delight is in ſuch objects as ſpeak moſt to its diſadvantage. The ſtate and magnificence of *a Tomb* or *Monument*, ſteals a ſecret wiſh from me to be *Tenant* to that quiet

quiet, ſilent Pomp, more than the ſight of a ſumptuous Palace, to be Lord and Maſter there.

I know that I carry *a Ghoſt* always about me, and that I my ſelf am *a walking Spirit:* This thought allays in me thoſe vulgar fears of the haunts and viſits of *Spectres.* And as I am not at all afraid of my ſelf (unleſs, when God lets looſe his *terrours* upon my Soul, and my Conſcience laſhes me for my ſins, *Job* 18. 11.) ſo I am very little apprehenſive of *Apparitions:* Nay more,

I could wiſh the Communications more frequent betwixt us and the Inhabitants of *the upper world:* It would harden our Chriſtian Courage, familiarize to us the thoughts of Separation; and create in us a paſſionate Love of that Country, from the good report of theſe *ſpiritual Spies*, making us ſay with courageous *Caleb*, *Let us go up and poſſeſs it*, Numb. 13. 30.

I could (I thank God) ſtare a reputed *Witch* full in the face, with as little

little terrour as I look upon *a ſucking Infant* ; and boldly retort the *poyſonous emiſſions* of her malicious Eyes. For in this I take *Balaam* at his word (who without doubt had tried the Experiment)that there is no *Enchantment* againſt *Jacob*, neither is there any *Divination* againſt *Iſrael*, *Numb.* 23. 23.

I pretend not by the *Title* of this ſmall Treatiſe to any extraordinary *Scheme* or new *draught* of Religion for the *Clergy*, much leſs would I be thought

thought ſlily to ſuggeſt any neglect or deficiency of theirs in the practice of the *Old:* I am very well aſſured, that *Religio Clerici* is a direct *Tautologie*; and yet I detract no more from the Sanctimonious Worth of the Clergy, by the conjunction of theſe two *terms*, than I deny the Sun to be the Fountain of Light, when I ſay, *Lumen Solis.* Only I could wiſh that we were all, not only good and vertuous, but *eminently* and in the laſt degree ſo

too; and that all the leſſer Chriſtian *Luminaries* might more and more derive Light from us. I would have all the Wiſdome and Vertue that ever appeared in the *guiſe* of true Reaſon in the world, ſumm'd up and amaſſed in *a Chriſtian Prieſt*; eſpecially in a daily, ſincere contempt of this world. We ſhould ſtrive clearly to demonſtrate the certain hope we have of Eternal Felicity after Death, by being very careleſs, if at all ſenſible of this Life. And in this

this let us ſoar a pitch beyond the higheſt flights of the wiſeſt *Heathens*, and outdo in very *fact* their utmoſt *Ideas* and *Hyperboles.*

The excellent Speculations of ſome old *Philoſophers* aroſe ('tis true) to a very great height, and their refined Reaſon was exerciſed in moſt divine Contemplations: But alas! the better and purer their *Notions* were of Vertue and Sanctity, they became ſo much the more *impracticable* to them, and they fell ſhort in the

performance of their own Rules and Dictates. The Cauſe of this natural inability and latent *impotency* of their Wills, they were altogether ſtrangers to; and thô they knew in effect moſt Doctrines of *Chriſtian Morality*, yet having not the *Faith of Jeſus*, nor by conſequence the aſſiſtance of God's particular Grace, their knowledge was but of ſmall import and ſignificancy; nor could it in the very beſt of them produce actions acceptable to God, unleſs his ſecret

ſecret infinite Mercy gave ſome gracious allowances for that natural corruption which they knew nothing of, and which was cured but in a poor degree by *univerſal Grace.*

And this Notion I have framed to my ſelf of the *Heathens* Morality, enclines me to believe, that our Wills derived from *Adam*'s diſobedience, a depravity double to that of our *Intellects*; for as we ſee by theſe *Pagans*, their Underſtanding could excellently diſtinguiſh, and were (in the *Serpent's*

words) as Gods knowing good and evil, yet were *the Imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts always evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. But we Chriſtian *Prieſts*, that have ſucceſſively received all the *gradual* Communications of Divine Grace, and Sanctifications of the bleſſed Spirit, from the *Font* to the Miniſtry of the holy *Altar*, are doubly obliged, as we tranſcend the beſt of them in the ſublime *Myſteries* of our Faith, ſo to outſtrip them in the moſt excellent practices

ctices of *Evangelical* Morality; and not them only, but all others alſo.

Non poſſumus perficere bonam actionem ſine adjutorio Gratiæ, is rightly oppoſed to *Pelagius*; nor is the propoſition only *notional:* for beſides that our Saviour tells us, *without me ye can do nothing*, Joh. 15.5. And St. *Paul*, that *'tis God which worketh in us, both to will and do*, Philip. 2.13. I have often obſerved, (in my own narrow *œconomy*) that the cleareſt Convi-

ctions of Reaſon, and ſtrongeſt Moral Reſolutions, have proved weak and of ſmall force againſt the power of moſt ſins; eſpecially againſt the violent aſſaults of a *complexional Vice:* We may ſin and reſolve to the contrary, and reſolve and ſin again *in infinitum*, till with *Jacob we wraſtle with God*, (Gen.32.26.) as well as *reſiſt the Devil*; until by violent Prayer we *take Heaven by force*, (Matth.11.12.) and draw down the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, all our o-

ther

ther ſtrongeſt and moſt vigorous Efforts will prove feeble and ineffectual. The very Experience of this hath confuted *Pelagianiſme* to me, better than a thouſand *Syllogiſms.*

I have ſeldome gone to Bed(in the days of looſeſt Vanity, and before I was ſo happy as ſincerely to eſpouſe the *Predicate*, much leſs had the honour to wear the *ſubject* of this Books title) without *Pythagoras* his Πῶ παρέβην, τί δ'ἐρέξα, &c. *Aur. Carm.* My reaſon hath upon an impar-

tial ſumming up that days *Evidence* made my own Conſcience a ſevere *Jury* againſt me, in pronouncing a perfect diſlike and condemnation of ſuch proceedings: I have then made applications of (as I thought) ſtrong reſolves to obſerve its dictates for the future; and this hath in ſome meaſure aſſwaged the ſmart of my minde then. But alas! my *trial* all this while being at the wrong *Bar*, I could never obtain a true Pardon for old, nor ſtrength againſt new *Lapſes*: My Inclinations

nations to ſin have doubled upon me; and when they felt the *Curb* of Reaſon pinch them, they began to be *reſty*; or as if a plain diſcovery had more and more hardned their countenances, the *Senſualities* which they privately ſtole before, they began now to act with remorſeleſs *Effronterie*; nay more, they would mutter Arguments for their Juſtification alſo: This indeed *alarm'd* me to the quick; I examin'd my ſelf immediately by the *ſtandard of the San-*

Sanctuary; fell proſtrate at the Throne of Grace, and obtained Balm from *Gilead* to cure the Wounds of my repeated weakneſſes. And (by this new method) I felt more ſtrength in a ſhort time from a ſingle, but hearty Prayer, *Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil*, than from all the cleareſt and niceſt reaſons and perſwaſions of the *Peripatum*, or *Porticus*.

Not but that theſe *Ethicks*, together with a rational and impartial

ſurvey

ſurvey of ourſelves, may produce ſtronger and better effects in others than they did in me; but we muſt not rely on the guidance and conviction of theſe alone to amend us; leſt we make no better advances than mere *Ethnicks*, by the force of Free-will, and conduct of humane Reaſon: Common Moralities belonging not (perhaps) to the ſame *ſpecies* with *Evangelical Graces*, but differing from them as much in eſſential Beauty, as theſe do from the perfection of *Angelical*

lical Obedience. For (I ſay once more) my Opinion is, that our Wills received a deeper *tincture* of corruption, and a far larger *Doſe* of Depravity from *Adam*'s Fall, than the Intellectual Faculty; foraſmuch as we finde the former ſtrongly averſe to obſerve and practiſe thoſe Doctrines, which the Religion of *Jeſus* teaches, and which ſome *Heathens* had a rough *draught* of from Natural Reaſon, I mean the *Theorems* of Morality, and that in no mean meaſure neither: for ex-

excepting ſuch revealed Myſteries as have a peculiar relation to the incomprehenſible *Theanthropy*, What ſublime Doctrine of Chriſtian *Philoſophy* have they not hinted? Even ſo far, as to the forgiving and loving their Enemies. But yet, I cannot believe that their actions were in a ſuitable degree correſpondent to their Principles, nor did their practices make advances equal to their Speculations and *Theorick* Knowledge. Why ſhould any man therefore vainly rely

rely upon that pretended mighty thing, the natural ſtrength of *Free-Will?* Let us Chriſtians rather exclaim, *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis*, &c.

If it were poſſible to encline me to the *Predeſtinarian* Opinion, the urging the *ninth Chapter to the* Romans would not work half ſo much upon me, as our Lord and Saviour's Anſwer to that Queſtion, *Lord, are there few that are ſaved? Strive* (ſaith he, Luke, 13. 24.) *to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many* (*I ſay*

ſay unto you) will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

And truly when I conſider the little ſence and knowledge which moſt Chriſtians (to omit by ten times the greater part of mankinde) have of the *Divine Life*, how deeply the generality is immerſed in the prejudices of Nature, clouded with dull groſneſs of Intellect, and inapprehenſive Ignorance of the true ſtate of Nature, and the Methods and Conditions of their *Redemption*; Slaves to Vices

Vices of Conſtitution or Habit, diverted by neceſſary cares and worldly buſineſs, intangled in (almoſt) unavoidable Injuſtices of Commerce and Traffique, and wholly taken up with affairs of *Natural* or *Political* Life; in a word, led captive to ſin, *by the Luſts of the Fleſh, the luſts of the Eye, and Pride of Life*, 1 Joh. 2. 16. When too, I obſerve the natural averſneſs of our Wills, the many exact circumſtances required to compleat a good action, *Bonum ex integrâ*

integrâ causâ, malum ex quolibet defectu: When I regard the way almoſt of all *Fleſh* ſince *Adam*, how ſenceleſs and careleſs of *celeſtial* buſineſs; but above all, when I think on the moſt incredible obſtinacy (had not God ſaid it) and prodigious perverſneſs of the antient *Jews*, under the palpable ſenſe and ocular Convictions of Miracles and Judgments: When I read *Adam* ſtumbled and fell amidſt all the Rays of *Divinity* in *Paradiſe*; that *Peter* with cowardly

Per-

Perjury could deny his Maſter (*Mat.* 26. 74.) the known Son of God, contrary to fair warning given him by his Lord, and all his late *bravadoes* of Fidelity even to Death, *Mat.* 26. 34, 35. and more than all this, contrary to his great and glorious *Confeſſion*, Mat. 16. 16. That wiſe *Solomon* ſacrificed to the *Devil*, althô he had ſeen God twice, 1 *King.* 11. 8, 9. When, I ſay, I ſum up all this together, I wonder (with deep *adoration* of God's Mercy) that any one man

is ſaved, and ſnatcht from amongſt the ſtrong *Entanglements* of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, whoſe indefatigable temptations, and ſly Devices to entrap us, I forgot to mention.

But again, when I ponder the methods of God's gracious dealing with us in the infallible *Revelations* of his Will in his *holy Word*; his paſſionate Expoſtulations, and kinde Invitations, by promiſes of Eternal Life and Felicity; his diſſwaſions from Sin, by dreadful Threats of

of endleſs Miſery, all which in all other Caſes are the firſt and moſt forcible *Motives* of humane Actions: But above all, when I reflect upon the ſtupendious *Myſtery* of the *Godhead's* becoming Fleſh for our Redemption, the Ineffable Majeſty; grand import and ſignificancy, ſtrong and comfortable Efficacy, and the final End and Deſigne of that incomprehenſible piece of Mercy, together with the helps and comforts of the holy *Sacraments*, thoſe ſure Conveiances

veiances of aſſiſting Grace, the inward workings of the Holy Spirit, together with our own ſtrong Convictions, and the *Panacæa* of all deſperate repeated Falls and *Apoſtaſies*, (God's gracious acceptance of true, though never ſo late) *Repentance*; conſidering (I ſay) all theſe, 'tis a Miracle to me, how any Rational Man ſhould finally miſcarry to damnation, much leſs that after all this, the *ſurpluſage* of number ſhould ſtill lye on the ſide of the *caſtaways*. And I am more and more

more plunged and puzled in this point, when I narrowly conſider the Motives and Reaſons of humane Actions, and the true nature of *Free-will.* The bare freedom of our Will hath certainly all reaſons imaginable to *ballance* it on the ſide of Vertue and Piety; it is not only cured of its natural corruption by Grace, but the power of this Grace muſt be allowed to have the prevalency above the force of any temptation, *Rom.* 5. 20, 21. For 'tis *derogatory* to our Saviour's

Merits

Merits to imagine, that we are ſtill left to ſtruggle with ſin upon *unequal oddes.*

Their *Notion* of Will who ſuppoſe it a *Faculty* diſtinct from the Intellect, I approve not of; and to call it a blinde Power, yet allow it *liberty* of Election, is beyond my underſtanding to apprehend. I rather underſtand the Will to be the laſt reſolution of the Intellectual Faculty, as it tends to action in exerting its power: So that I think *Intellectus practicus* may

include Will too well enough; For what ever humane action proceeds from rational *Volition*, is ſuppoſed (more or leſs) to have paſſed the deliberation of our Underſtanding; that is, the very ſame power of a reaſonable Soul (for I think not the Faculties diſtinct) firſt conſiders and judges, then determines it ſelf to action.

Yet there are ſome humane Actions where violent *ſurprize* or the forcible ſway of a *conſtitutional Vice* may hurry the Will

Will to ſudden choice, before the Intellect in that confuſion can appear at the *Election*; as in Fits of *Cholerick* or *Luſtful* Paſſions: But theſe ſeem to me actions of the *Animal* rather than the Man, and more properly *ſpontaneous* than free: And yet we have a few Inſtances of the *Triumph* of Grace over ſudden provoking Temptations even of this ſort, as in *David's* patient Meekneſs in the buſineſs of *Shimei*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 9, 10. when *Abiſhai* (thô not pointed at) was

all on fire with bloudy rage and fury, as indeed it was his duty: And *Joseph*'s resisting the importunate *Sollicitations*, and at last almost *Ravishment* of his Masters Wife *in instanti*, contrary to Flesh and Bloud, Interest and Ambition, that with joynt forces assaulted his Honour and Honesty all at once, as the case then stood. But to return, I suppose an humane Soul to be a Simple Thinking *Essence*, that judges and acts with rational deliberation, and which hath more

more and ſtronger Motives *ab intra* and *ab extra* ſo to do, in matters of Chriſtian Duty, than in any other occaſions of Life whatſoever. By all this I mean, in a word, if there be greater *Motives* in Religion to incline this free thinking Soul of ours (according to her own common natural way of working) to good actions, than any other *Principle* can pretend to, to decline her to bad, (and which motives ſhe firmly believes and aſſents to) how can we in

Reaſon, Religion, or *Philoſophy* ſolve the general Inclinations of Chriſtians in the groſs the other way, when the more forcible *poize* lies here; unleſs we make her freedom (like that of *Fortune's*) the moſt ſenceleſs indifferency imaginable; and that ſhe hath no regard or dependence on knowledg or perſwaſion, but lets her actions out looſe, and *at rovers*; which is *Nonſence* to me.

But farther ſtill, to chooſe a finite good before an Infinite, a temporal

ral before an eternal, that is (in ſhort) a leſs before a greater; nay more, to chooſe in effect willingly her own deſtruction, for the ſake of a preſent Pleaſure or Intereſt, this is all to act quite contrary to all her other *common Methods* of proceeding in any other caſes whatſoever. To ſay ſhe could not abſolutely be free, unleſs ſhe could do thus, (*i. e.* act againſt the very Principles of her being, & thoſe of Self-preſervation) and that ſuch a bare indeterminate Power is the

eſpecial Prerogative of her freedome) is nothing but what I will grant; but yet ſtill for all that, 'tis natural and rational to preſume that this abſolutely Free will ſhould rather, and moſt generally, in moſt Caſes be directed (in Religion eſpecially) by the dictates of clear Judgment, and *convictions* of Underſtanding: And ſince theſe in the buſineſs of *Chriſtianity* bend (confeſſedly) to the ſide of Vertue and Goodneſs, Why are not the moſt of men (according to this ex-

explanation of our Wills motion and operation) *ballanced* rather that way, than the other, as we ſee daily? If any one urge here the natural *impotency* in our Wills derived from *Adam*'s corruption: I rejoyn (as before) that the Death of Chriſt and God's Grace doth abundantly *poyze* that Infirmity, nay more, helps our Will to advantage above that. But farther ſtill, 'tis our nature to be *rational*; 'tis highly rational to be religious: what an excellent *conſequence* doth now naturally

follow? and yet (I fear) a thouſand to one *de facto* miſcarry: *Little Flock*, ſaith our Saviour, *Luk.* 12. 32. that ſtartles me.

Theſe Conſiderations, that the generality of Mankinde (Chriſtians I mean) act according to their *Capacities* in the true diſcernment of the *Colours* of Good and Evil, in all (or moſt) caſes but Religion, (which nevertheleſs is their greateſt Intereſt, by confeſt plain Conviction) this, I ſay, general *miſcarriage* of Free-will, together with our Saviour's

our's aforeſaid Anſwer to the Queſtion, *Luk.* 13.24. inclines me to fear (till I am better informed) that few men are happy in the *abſolute* uſe of unreſtrain'd *Freedome*, but that in moſt there is a ſecret *imperceptible clog* upon humane Will in its tendencies and operations.

To ſum up all, if our Will be free, and that freedom not ſimply *blinde*, but naturally (much more ſpiritually) directed by Underſtanding; and that Underſtanding informed by the confeſt Truths and

ſtrong Convictions of Religion (tending to *Self-preſervation Poſitive and Negative* in the higheſt degree) and theſe again aſſiſted and inclinable to action by *Divine Grace*; and if there be a preſent *Redreſs* and effectual Remedy by Repentance for all poſſible *Lapſes*; How comes the *generality* of us to force Nature, Reaſon, Religion, Conviction, Demonſtration & Intereſt to act directly againſt their reſpective proper *Principles?* How is it that the true *Iſraelites pitch like two little*

little flocks of Kids; but the Syrians *fill the Countrey?* 1 Kin. 20.27. How is it that the number of the Goats ſo far exceeds that of the Sheep? *The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God: but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of the Law,* Deut. 29. 29.

Such *Contemplative Perplexities* as theſe, do ſometimes entertain my private thoughts, I confeſs, but I make no farther Conſequences than what you have juſt now read; nor

nor do I harbour the leaſt ſurmiſe that touches the Juſtice of the moſt Juſt God, or deduce any *Inference* that may have a bad influence on my actions; nor do I follow the lewd humour of this Age in urging *Neceſſity* and *Impoſſibility*, as Compurgators for their habitual wicked practices. I conclude no Neceſſity, or irreverſible Decree abſolutely from theſe and ſuch like Meditations; but think when I am moſt puzzled, that then my poor weakneſs and Ignorance

rance appears moſt.

I believe my Will abſolutely free in all actions barely *Moral and Political*; and in Divine, that there is a concurrence of my freedome with ſupernatural Grace. If I did not credit the former, I ſhould make my ſelf *a Machine*, mere *Clock-work*; and if I diſtruſted the latter, the Book of God and Religion ſeems *Impoſture* and Deluſion. All my *Amuſements* ariſe from hence, that (in all appearance) a thouſand to one miſcarry, when (if all had

a free uſe of their principles) there ſeems to be a thouſand to one that they ſhould not.

I will now return to what engaged me in this *caſual digreſſion*, (which yet was ſo great a block in my way, as that I could not well ſtep over it) *viz.* That I would have all things Sacred, Wiſe and Vertuous, included in the very name of *Chriſtian Prieſt*. And ſince all the true *Philoſophy* (Divine and Moral, I mean) that hath ever been ſince *Adam*, is *ſublimated* by the refined

refined Doctrines of the great *Messiah*, I would have my Priest *a magnifying Mirrour* of it all; or in our Saviours words, *Be the light of the world*, Mat. 5. 14.

'Tis a dull thing to *jog* through all the *stages* of this Life in the common Road of Nature, and to live over again the vulgar ordinary Life, that the generality of Men have done since *Adam*, to be governed by Sense and Convenience, and look no farther than the Sun, Moon or Stars; unless likewise

likewiſe we refine our Thoughts and Wiſhes to the laſt degree, *mould* our groſs Natures anew, and create a difference as great betwixt the vulgar *herd* of Mankinde and our ſelves, as is betwixt them and *Brutes*: Let us but truely regard the *tranſcendency* and nobility of our *Function*, whoſe *Heraldry* cannot be *Blazon'd* beneath *Saturn*. We may (in this caſe) invert the ſence of our Saviour's words, & ſay, *Mat.* 13. 57. *No Prophet has honour but in his own Country.*

Country. Heaven is the Kingdome from whence we are *delegated* as Ambaſſadours of Chriſt, not as *Reſidents*; and we ſhould long to be called back. If we *Prieſts* are indeed in good earneſt as to the buſineſs of the *upper world*, 'tis a wonder to me, that our moſt paſſionate Deſires make not good the words of St. *Paul* literally, *in wiſhing to dye dayly.* 1 Cor. 15. 31.

The enjoyment of my Saviour in the Heaven of Heavens, in his *Humane Nature*,

Nature, whereby he is graciouſly pleaſed to become not a Mediator only, but *Interpreter* alſo betwixt my Soul and the incomprehenſible and *unintelligible Godhead*, raiſes Ecſtatick *Languiſhments* often in my longing minde to adjourn from this groſs body, and I deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, *Phil.* 1. 23.

The Joys of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem* as they are ſupernatural, ſo contrary to the nature of all other *Objects*, they encreaſe and magnifie by diſtance,

distance; appearing so much the bigger to me, because I cannot see them at all: and when my Eye hath passed the *Regions* of the Stars, which shew still less and less by length of *prospect*, all things above them encrease by divine Contemplation, and grow greater and greater, till I am lost and swallowed up in the *Infinity* of my Maker. The bounds of my *Native* Country begin, where the biggest of the *fixt Stars* would be invisible, and the *Frontiers* of Heaven lye beyond

yond the *Ken* of Senſe. Theſe thoughts run me almoſt to *raptures* unawares. But as I was ſaying, ſince our Faith hath *Myſteries* beyond the higheſt reach of *Plato*'s *Ideas*, and that our Doctrines are refined above the pureſt of the great *Ariſtotle*'s *Ethicks*, and our Precepts of Self-denial, better and more agreeable to Humane Nature than the impracticable *Apathie* of the *Romantick Stoicks*; Let us outlive the Wiſdome and Philoſophy of the whole world, and outdo

do them all at their own *weapon.* In order to all which, the ſkill of a Chriſtian *Prieſt* can no ways appear ſo clearly, as in a perfect contempt of this world; in which there is nothing worth the regards of a wiſe man. 'Tis true, we finde a continual longing in our Souls after ſome thing, which we cannot meet with here; and therefore we trace the *ſummum bonum* (to no purpoſe) through all the various *Mazes* of Nature, till the repetition of the moſt delightful objects turns

turns *nauſeous*, and leaves us more to ſeek than when we firſt began: We never run in *View* of it here (when we are moſt pleaſed) but after all our tireſome Courſes finde in the cloſe, that we have all the while *hunted* our ſelves weary by *a wrong Scent.*

Nay more, the very *keeneſt* pleaſures of Nature, and ſuch as the greateſt *Senſualiſts rhodomontade* moſt upon, affect us leaſt, when they are greateſt, and glut but Sence to an Inſenſibility; or elſe they

they vaniſh in the embrace, dye in the graſp, leaving not the leaſt *track of flavour* or ſweetneſs behind, but rather a diſſatisfyed and ſtill craving Appetite.

Beſides all this, the pleaſures of this life concern the *brute* more properly than the man; nor do the higheſt ſenſible joys touch the better half of humane nature, unleſs it be to its *abatement* and diſadvantage: for Reaſon is always at the *loweſt ebb*, if not quite extinct, in acts of the greateſt *ſenſuality*.

But that the people may verily believe us, when we promiſe to carry them to a Land *flowing with milk and honey*; that they may indeed think us in good earneſt, when we tell them, *that eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. let none of us in any faſhion caſt a longing look backward on the *fleſhpots of Egypt*, in our advances to the heavenly *Canaan*.

And

And above all, we muſt expreſs lively the deep ſenſe and ſtedfaſt truſt we have of heavenly treaſure, in being regardleſs of this worlds wealth, and of the *Mammon* of unrighteouſneſs: to ſet any extraordinary value upon which, is in all men irreligious, in a *Churchman* abominable and odious; 'tis baſe *Idolatry*, Col. 3. 5. and blaſphemy to Divine Providence; 'tis to unravel the peculiar principle of *Chriſtianity*, and run *retrograde* to the ſteps of the holy Jeſus: 'tis to ſet

up *golden Calves in* Bethel, and by ill example to hinder the people from going to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip. The *vulgar* expect, and juſtly too, ſomewhat extraordinary in the *Prieſts*; but when they ſee them tempted in all things like unto themſelves, and yet not without as great ſin; when the ſame corrupt paſſions and worldly affections appear in them, how ſhould vulgar prejudice and ignorance believe their Doctrines, or not deſpiſe their perſons? We are obliged

above

above all men to approve our ſelves the Diſciples of Chriſt, by imitating in a due meaſure the ſimple meanneſs and plain poverty of our Saviours Life and Converſation; at leaſt (when our *accidental grandeur* is greateſt) we muſt be poor in Matth. 5. 3. ſpirit. No eager *purſuit*, or reſtleſs intemperate deſire of wealth or honour, muſt be harboured by us, who are to fix Heb. 11. 16 our whole hopes on another Country; and we ſhould confeſs our ſelves ſtrangers and *Pilgrims* on

this Earth, by the precept and examples of all the holy *Prophets and Apoſtles* throughout the whole Book of God. But if our heavenly Father have bleſſed us with affluence and increaſe, 'tis impious to let his *bounty* beget a baſe and *ſordid* parcimony in us, whom by this he deſigned as *diſpenſers* and ſtewards of his goodneſs and providence to the poor, the Fatherleſs and the Widow. *Pure* Jam. 1.27. *Religion and undefiled before God*, ſaith St. *James*, *is to viſit the father-*

fatherleſs and widows in their affliction. And St. John, *Whoſo hath this Worlds good, and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* 1 Joh. 3. 17.

We are the poor man's *Advocate and Sollicitor* with others, and our ſelves are the proper *Chanels and Conveyances* through whom God derives his refreſhing ſtreams to the needy; and if, in their running thorow our hands, they leave

but enough behind them to ſatisfie our own neceſſary wants and occaſions, 'tis all we can in duty call ours.

For the rich therefore among us to be *cloſe-handed*, and niggardly towards the want of our Brethren, and to fancy we have performed our part in Preaching to ſave their Souls, when at the ſame time we let their Bodies ſtarve; this is a Crime of *a deeper die* than to fall under the notion of common *Avarice*; 'tis with *Sacrilegious* hands to

to ſtop the current of God's Goodneſs, and to rob the publick *ſtock* of Providence. But *a Diſcourſe* of this kinde here, I hope is al ogether needleſs; And theſe brief Hints are deſigned more to prevent overſights of this kinde that may happen, than to ſuggeſt any neglects that now are.

I am naturally inclined to Tenderneſs and Pity, and therefore conſider it not in my ſelf as a Vertue. The Pain of *a Brute* methinks touches my ſenſe in the *remote relation of*

animality: But as I am included in the *maſs* of *Mankinde*, and am a piece of the *Species*; ſo again I think each part of that (in a manner) a piece of me; at leaſt 'tis a member of that *whole*, whereof I my ſelf am alſo a part: And therefore I cannot ſee a Wound, or Hurt, or Grief in another, but I fancy I feel it in my ſelf; and a certain ſenſible Pain is derived to me by *Sympathetick Communication*, as I have one ſhare in the *whole*. And thus methinks in eaſing the Grief, or want

or

or pain of another, I apply a Remedy to my own Sore, and aſſwage the ſmart of that Pain, which I feel in the *great body* of Mankinde.

But ſtill farther: the Sufferings of another affect me (yet ſtill) by a nearer and more tender concern, and as I am a Member of Chriſts *Myſtical Body*, the leaſt *Dolour* in any other part touches me to the *quick*, and I eaſily *Sympathize* with the wants of a *Fellow-Member*; otherwiſe I ſhould fear I had no part with my Saviour, or as a dead Mem-

ber had loſt all ſenſe of the Divine Life.

And now (Reader) to ſum up all (thô much more might be ſaid on the noble ſubject of this *Treatiſe*) as I entertained thy firſt glance with a *Figure* at the beginning, ſo I will conclude all in preſenting thee a *ſlight Pourtrait* of a true Clergyman.

He is one that fears *God* and the *King*, and meddles not with them that are given to *change*; he believes and can prove, that the King is *Head* of Church

Church and State immediately under God, and that He is *accountable* to none but Heaven. He zealouſly aſſerts the *Royal Prerogative*, and reveres the *Fundamental Laws* of the Land, and that for Conſcience ſake; yet neither baſely *fawns*, nor buſily *rails* himſelf (the better *trick* of the two) into *Preferment*. The Word of God is his *Compaſs*, and his Conſcience the *Needle* by which he *ſteers* as ſteady a Courſe in the moſt tempeſtuous, as in the moſt ſerene and calmeſt

calmeſt Weather. He knows his *Commiſſion* runs high, and his *Character* to be great, as he is the *Ambaſſadour* of the King of Heaven; and therefore he dares not ſtoop out of baſe fear to any unwarrantable *compliance* to the diſhonour of his Maſter, as alſo pretends not a falſe Licence by an aſſuming Pride to affront the Princes that give him Audience. If by his Prudence and Conduct his *Ambaſſage* meets with ſucceſs, and anſwers the deſires of his *Maſter*, he is joyful,

joyful; if with neglect or contempt, he rails not: but at his recalling home (he knows) muſt make his Report at his *Maſter's Court.* If any miſcarriage have hapned through his folly or fear, he knows very well that the puniſhment is *Capital.* He ſtrives not to make himſelf reverʼd by a ſtarcht Deportment, affected Gravity, or a *mortified Grimace*; but by acts of Piety, Loyalty, and Charity: and his *Motto* is *Semper Idem*, as having the ſame meek even Temper of Minde when

when *Biſhop*, as when *Vicar*. If he be not very *Learned*, he is nevertheleſs honeſt and painful in his Calling: if he be, he is not aſſuming or *dogmatical*, much leſs an ill-bred *pedantick Opiniator*. He is dutiful to his *Dioceſan*, and obedient to his *Ordinary*; and his Converſation towards his *Flock* is an equal mixture of Affability, Gravity, and Meekneſs. He carefully *calculates* his Sermons for the *Meridian* of his Pariſhioners, and reproves their Irregularities with awe and

and reverence from the *Pulpit*, where 'tis the word of God; but with a more familiar Gentleneſs in private Converſe, where 'tis his own. If by chance he light into Company profane or obſcene, he expreſſes a diſlike rather grave than moroſe; and can tell when to reprove with *Raillery*, when with Severity: He knows too, when to rebuke one Oath will occaſion *half a ſcore*, and an affront to the *Parſon* to *boot*; this *boiſterous* rude company of all he

ſhuns,

ſhuns, where contempt muſt needs follow both ways. He can eaſily and *adjuſtly* act the Scholar or the Gentleman, as occaſion requires; but his general Converſation hath a due mixture of both. At Table his diſcourſe is the moſt ſavoury *Sawce*, and here he is liberal and hoſpitable, as knowing very well that *Principles* of Obedience and Conformity *work* beſt, when they are *taken down* in good Meat and Drink *gratis*. He is dutiful and thankful to his *Patron*, yet cannot connive

connive at, much leſs flatter his *Vice:* In a word, he hath true Chriſtian Courage, *and fears not man that can kill the body and do no more.*

The End.

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